

Occasional Celebrations

Occasional Celebrations

of the Anglican Church of Canada



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Introduction

The Book of Alternative Services of the Anglican Church of Canada was published in 1985. Like *The Book of Common Prayer* it contains the frequently used liturgical texts which the church needs for its everyday and ongoing life. However, there are other events and occasions when people want to pray together for which texts are also required. This book is intended to meet that need.

The forms provided in this book should be regarded as models and not as rigid scripts whose details must be followed exactly. These texts should be used as the basis of adaptation which evokes the liturgical creativity of the local church. For instance, the material provided for each of the seasonal festivals of readings and music is much more abundant than any congregation could use on one occasion. Similarly, the section devoted to the subject of blessing provides not only suggestions for those who wish to write their own forms of blessing but also theological reflection on the principles involved.

This book also bears witness to the fact that the liturgical process is always unfinished, not least because that process reflects subtle movements in the church's understanding. For instance, the rite of induction has been the subject of some discussion (even disagreement) in the church in recent years. Opinions on its purpose and nature have varied. This division of opinion finds expression in the two forms of induction offered here, reflecting two different (but legitimate) approaches to the relationship of minister, congregation, and the common task.

This book is published in looseleaf form to facilitate ongoing expansion and change. In the course of time new texts will undoubtedly be created and some of the texts in the book may be replaced. This collection does not exhaust new possibilities.

This book was prepared by a number of members of a number of committees over a period of some years. It reflects the styles and emphases of several authors. Its variety complements the variety in unity which may be found throughout the church. It is the task of congregations and their liturgical leaders to make these rites their own in ways which are appropriate to their contexts.

New Texts 1995

During the triennium ending with the 1995 session of the General Synod, the Doctrine and Worship Committee prepared three texts to be included in the collection already published as *Occasional Celebrations*. These are, "The Welcoming and Seating of a bishop in the Cathedral," "After a Miscarriage or a Stillbirth," and "The Celebration and Blessing of the Marriage of a Christian and a Person of Another Faith Tradition." The latter liturgical text is supplied as a model illustrating Guidelines on marriage between a Christian and a person of another faith tradition which were developed jointly by members of the Inter- Church Inter- Faith Relations Committee and the Doctrine and Worship Committee. All of these texts were approved by the National Executive Council and are to be used under the authorization of the bishop.

New Texts 2001

"Prayers for Interfaith Gatherings"

"Guidelines on Worship Involving Christians and People of Other Faith Traditions" and "Guidelines for Interfaith Dialogue"

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Seasons and Festivals

Advent Festival of Readings and Music

Concerning the Occasion

When an Advent Festival of Readings and Music takes place in the evening it may be introduced by Introductory Responses No. 1 (p. 96 in The Book of Alternative Services), the lighting of the Advent wreath, and the Advent Thanksgiving for Light (p. 63 in The Book of Alternative Services). The service may continue with a bidding prayer (example follows), and readings interspersed with thematically related seasonal hymns, carols, canticles, responsories, and anthems. It may conclude with the Advent Litany, an appropriate collect, the Lord's Prayer, and a seasonal blessing.

When an Advent Festival of Readings and Music is held in the morning or early afternoon, it may begin with the lighting of the Advent wreath (p. A34 in Occasional Celebrations), the Advent Introductory Responses (p. 96 in The Book of Alternative Services), and Psalm 24 or Psalm 67 or another psalm appointed for the Advent season. The service may then continue as described above.

When an Advent Festival of Readings and Music is combined with the eucharist, a selection of readings interspersed with thematically related seasonal hymns, carols, canticles, responsories, and anthems may be used as the Proclamation of the Word. The Advent Litany (p. 119 in The Book of Alternative Services) may be used as the Prayers of the People. The Lord's Prayer is used only after the eucharistic prayer.

The following material may be adapted as appropriate. Traditional vigil services consist of at least three readings and not more than nine readings. When an Advent Festival of Readings and Music is combined with the eucharist, the final reading, at least, is from one of the Gospels.

Advent Festival of Readings and Music

A Bidding for Advent

My sisters and brothers in Christ,
in these days of shadow and of hope
let it be our duty and delight
to listen to the story of our faith,
and hear again the prophets' words of blessing and doom.
And, as we prepare to celebrate again
the birth of Jesus Christ as a baby,
let us remember that he also comes
to judge the just and the unjust,
and to establish the reign of equity and peace.

In the following section, two or three phrases may be chosen which will match some of the readings which will follow. The language and order may be adapted as required.

As we hear the reading of God's holy word, let us

reflect on the time of our rebellion *Genesis 3*

respond to the call to prepare the way of the
Lord *Isaiah 40*

rejoice in the promise that all, from the greatest to the least,
will come to know our God *Jeremiah 31*

join with the prophet as he calls out to God to rend the
heavens and come down *Isaiah 64*

listen as Isaiah is called to be God's messenger to
the people *Isaiah 6*

hear Micah's call to justice, kindness, and a humble walk
with God *Micah 6*

find hope in the promise that the blind will see,
the deaf hear, the lame dance, and the silent burst
into song *Isaiah 35*

respond to the invitation to put on the robe of
righteousness as we anticipate the joy which is coming
to us *Baruch 5*

receive with joy the promise of the coming of the one
who will judge with righteousness and equity *Isaiah 11*
await with eagerness the creation of the new heaven and
the new earth. *Isaiah 65.1*

The bidding continues.

Let us remember that the Lord of Glory experienced the pain of life
and death, and pray for the sick, the poor, the oppressed, the
anxious, the weary, and the bereaved.

And remembering the promise that he shall reign for ever
and ever,

let us pray for the rulers of the nations,
for peace and justice on earth,
for the unity and mission of the Church,
that we may be a sign of the age to come.

With longing in our hearts for God's reign of peace,
let us hear again the story of Christ's coming,
and join with Mary and Joseph,
and all our forebears in faith,
in offering our worship.

Silence may be kept before the first reading.

The Readings

Festivals of Readings and Music are based historically on liturgies composed of nine readings, but fewer readings are often chosen. Usually each reading is read by a different person.

The lessons may be read in the same manner as in the Daily Offices (pp. 51 and 67 in The Book of Alternative Services), or they may be read without introduction or conclusion. Each reading may be followed by a period of silence, a prayer, or both, and then by an appropriate musical response.

- 1 *Genesis 2.4b–9,15–25 (In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens)*

Prayer

Creating God,
you call us to live in harmony
with nature, one another, and with you.

Now fix our eyes upon the one
in whom your purpose for the world has been revealed,
Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

- 2 *Genesis 3.1–20 (The eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked)*

Prayer

Almighty God,
to you all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from you no secrets are hidden.
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

- 3 *Isaiah 40.1–11 (Comfort, O comfort my people) or Isaiah 49.8–13
(The Lord has comforted his people)*

Prayer

God our hope,
hear again the cry of exiles,
imprisoned in a dark land of war, hunger, and intolerance.
Come among us with strength and healing
and bring us back to the world
of your just and holy purpose.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

- 4 *Jeremiah 31.31–34 (I will put my law within them, and I will write on their hearts)*

Prayer

God of new beginnings,
write your law within our hearts
that we may love as freely as we think and breathe,
and serve as naturally as children play.
Make us heralds of your new creation,

made known to us in Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

5 *Isaiah 64.1–9a (Tear open the heavens and come down)*

Prayer

O just Judge of all the world,
when the dark power of evil threatens your creation,
may we, through your strength within us,
maintain the sure knowledge of your love and mercy,
which we see in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

6 *Isaiah 6.1–11 (I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty)*

Prayer

Holy God,
centre of life and goodness,
touch our lips with the cleansing fire of your Word,
that we may speak peace to warriors,
and words of care
to those who waste the treasure of creation.
Assist us to proclaim to people everywhere
the way of selfless love,
offered and made known in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

7 *Micah 6.6–8 (To do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk
humbly with your God)*

Prayer

God of our longing,
we cannot earn the wholeness we desire,
nor win your healing grace
by offering back the bounty we receive.
Give us, we pray, hearts to learn your will,
and wills to do your pleasure
in works of justice and of peace.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen**

8 *Isaiah 35.1–10 (The desert shall rejoice and blossom)*

Prayer

Creating and renewing God,
giving life in all its fullness,

bring, we pray, all the children of this earth
to the freedom of your holy purpose.
May we see your beauty and glory
in seas and lakes washed clean,
in fields of plenty and forests strong,
and in humanity made whole
in body, mind, and mutual care,
in the pattern of Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

9 *Baruch 4.36–5.9 (See your children gathered from west and east, at the word of the Holy One)*

Prayer

God of pilgrims,
look with tender pity on your daughters and sons
dispersed by selfishness and greed,
and lead us from war and want
by the pathways of justice and peace.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

10 *Micah 5.2–4 (From you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel)*

Prayer

God of small beginnings,
you bring strength out of weakness
and hope out of fear.
By the power of your Spirit
make us, your children, followers and partners
in the grand design of your kingdom of love,
rooted and revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

11 *Isaiah 11.1–9 (The earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea)*

Prayer

God our salvation,
who by water and the Holy Spirit
delivered us from sin

and raised us to the new life of grace,
give us an inquiring and discerning heart,
the courage to will and to persevere,
a spirit to know and to love you,
and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

12 *Zephaniah 3.14–20 (At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you)*

Prayer

God of our exile,
we pray for peace in a world of war,
for health in a world of hunger,
for harmony in a world of discord.
Bring us home to the world as you would have it be,
subject to the reign of your love
and grounded in the mutual care of your children.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

13 *Isaiah 65.17–25 (For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth)*

Prayer

God of gentleness and peace,
teach our hands to shun the tools of violence
and our minds to conceive the paths of peace,
that we may know with thanksgiving
the joy of your generosity,
made known to us in Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

14 *Luke 1.5–25 (Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John)*

Prayer

Almighty God
you called John the Baptist
to give witness to the coming of your Son
and to prepare his way.
Give your people wisdom to see your purpose,
and openness to hear your will,
that we too may witness to Christ's coming
and so prepare his way;
through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

15 *Luke 1.26–38 (Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you!)*

Prayer

Pour your grace into our hearts, O Lord,
that we who have known the incarnation
of your Son Jesus Christ,
announced by an angel to the Virgin Mary,
may by his cross and passion
be brought to the glory of his resurrection;
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

16 *John 1.1–14 (The Word became flesh and lived among us ... full of grace and truth)*

Prayer

Eternal Wisdom, creating, ordering, and saving,
we give thanks that we have seen you
in the selfless love of Jesus Christ.
Now reign within our minds and hearts,
and mobilize our wills,
that by your power and through our hands
this world may be re-made
to be the garden and the city of your glory.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

A brief sermon or reflection on the readings may be given.

Advent Litany*

(In joyful expectation let us pray to our Saviour and Redeemer, saying, "Lord Jesus, come soon!")

O Wisdom, from the mouth of the Most High, you reign over all things to the ends of the earth: come and teach us how to live.

Lord Jesus, come soon!

O Lord, and head of the house of Israel, you appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush and you gave the law on Sinai: come with outstretched arm and ransom us.

Lord Jesus, come soon!

O Branch of Jesse, standing as a sign among the nations, all kings will keep silence before you and all peoples will summon you to their aid: come, set us free and delay no more.

Lord Jesus, come soon!

O Key of David and sceptre of the house of Israel, you open and none can shut; you shut and none can open: come and free the captives from prison.

Lord Jesus, come soon!

O Morning Star, splendour of the light eternal and bright Sun of righteousness: come and enlighten all who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Lord Jesus, come soon!

O King of the nations, you alone can fulfil their desires: Cornerstone, you make opposing nations one: come and save the creature you fashioned from clay.

Lord Jesus, come soon!

O Emmanuel, hope of the nations and their Saviour: come and save us, Lord our God.

Lord Jesus, come soon!

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Silence may be kept.

Collect

Almighty God,
give us grace to cast away the works of darkness
and put on the armour of light,
now in the time of this mortal life
in which your Son Jesus Christ
came to us in great humility,
that on the last day,
when he shall come again in his glorious majesty
to judge both the living and the dead,
we may rise to the life immortal;
through him who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Then the leader shall say,

With longing in our hearts for the reign of Christ,
let us offer our prayer
to the Source of our salvation.

All

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

Or

Leader

And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us,
we are bold to say,

All

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

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

Blessing

Be steadfast in faith, joyful in hope,
and untiring in love all the days of your life;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Christmas Festival of Readings and Music

Concerning the Occasion

A Christmas Festival of Readings and Music may be held at any time during the Christmas season.

When a Christmas Festival of Readings and Music takes place in the evening it may begin with the Service of Light (p. 61 in the The Book of Alternative Services) or with Introductory Responses No. 2 or No. 3 (p. 96 in The Book of Alternative Services) followed by the Christmas and Epiphany Thanksgiving for Light (p. 64 in The Book of Alternative Services). The service may continue with a bidding (example follows), and readings interspersed with thematically related seasonal hymns, carols, canticles, responsories, and anthems. It may conclude with the Incarnation Litany, an appropriate collect, the Lord's Prayer, and a seasonal blessing.

When a Christmas Festival of Readings and Music is held in the morning or early afternoon, it may begin with the Introductory Responses for the Incarnation or for Christmas and Epiphany (p. 96 in The Book of Alternative Services) and an appropriate hymn or canticle. The service may then continue as described above.

When a Christmas Festival of Readings and Music is combined with the eucharist, a selection of readings interspersed with thematically related seasonal hymns, carols, canticles, responsories, and anthems may be used as the Proclamation of the Word. The Incarnation Litany (p. 120 in The Book of Alternative Services) may be used as the Prayers of the People. The Lord's Prayer is used only after the eucharistic prayer.

The following material may be adapted as appropriate. Traditional vigil services consist of at least three readings and not more than nine readings. When a Christmas Festival of Readings and Music is combined with the eucharist, the final reading, at least, is from one of the Gospels.

Christmas Festival of Readings and Music

A Bidding for Christmas

My sisters and brothers in Christ,
in this season when we celebrate the birth of Jesus,
let it be our duty and delight
to hear once more the message of the angels
and go in heart and mind to Bethlehem
to see the Son of God lying in a manger.

In the following section, two or three phrases may be chosen which will match some of the readings which follow. The language and order may be adapted as required.

As we hear the reading of God's holy word, let us

reflect on the time of our rebellion against the creator
of the universe *Genesis 3*

rejoice that the glory of the Lord has been
revealed *Isaiah 40*

find comfort in the promise that the blind will see, the
deaf hear, the lame dance, and the silent burst into
song *Isaiah 35*

find new hope in the promise that God is with
us *Isaiah 7*

join with Mary, the favoured handmaid, and offer
ourselves in service to God's holy and saving purpose
for the world *Luke 1*

magnify the God of mercy who breaks the power of
tyrants and exalts the humble *Luke 1*

bless the name of the God of our salvation who brings the
dawn of forgiveness and salvation to those who live in
the shadow of death and despair *Luke 1*

raise our voices with the messenger who announces good
news of great joy to all people *Luke 2*

give thanks to the one whose power has made us the children of God *John 1*

The bidding continues.

As we mark once more the mystery of the Word made flesh, let us join with the song of angels and saints and make this place ring with our carols and hymns of praise.

But first, let us remember the poverty of the birth of the Prince of Peace, and pray for the poor, the cold, the hungry, and those among us who find that there is no room for them at the inn.

Let us remember the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt, and pray for the oppressed, refugees, the isolated, and those on the edges of our society.

Let us remember that the Lord of Glory experienced the pain of life and death, and pray for the sick, the anxious, the weary, and the bereaved.

And remembering the promise that he shall reign for ever and ever,

let us pray for the rulers of the nations,
for peace and justice on earth,
for the unity and mission of the Church,
that we may be a sign that God's rule on earth
has already begun.

With joy in our hearts,
let us hear again the story of the birth of Christ,
and join with Mary and Joseph,
with shepherds and wise men,
and with all our forebears in faith
in offering our worship.

Silence may be kept before the first reading.

The Readings

Festivals of Readings and Music are based historically on liturgies composed of nine readings, but fewer readings are often chosen. Usually each reading is read by a different person.

The lessons may be read in the same manner as in the Daily Offices (pp. 51 and 67 in The Book of Alternative Services), or they may be read without introduction or conclusion. Each reading may be followed by a period of silence, a prayer, or both, and then by an appropriate musical response.

- 1 *Genesis 2.4–9,15–25 (These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created)*

Prayer

Creating God,
you call us to live in harmony
with nature, with one another, and with you.
Now fix our eyes upon the one
in whom your purpose for our world has been revealed,
Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

- 2 *Genesis 3.1–20 (The eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked)*

Prayer

Almighty God,
to you all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from you no secrets are hidden.
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

- 3 *Isaiah 40.1–11 (Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God)*

Prayer

God of freedom,
give the strength of hope
to those who suffer oppression
in body, mind, or human dignity.
Let them hear the vanguard of your coming grace,
and give them the wholeness
you intend for all your children.

We ask this in the name of your Servant, Jesus Christ, the sign of your presence and the pioneer of our salvation, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

4 *Isaiah 35.1–10 (Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened)*

Prayer

Hope of the desperate and strength of the weak,
you give streams in the desert of wasted lives,
and abundant future to cities made desolate.
Hear our prayer for the exiles of our time,
the prisoners of poverty and tyranny,
the victims of illness, waste, and hunger.
Come among us as new life for all the world.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ,
Word made flesh and hope revealed. **Amen.**

5 *Isaiah 7.10–15 (The young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel)*

Prayer

God of hope,
look upon those who live with despair as their companion.
Give them signs of your healing presence
and of your eternal purpose of salvation.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

6 *Luke 1.5–25 (Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John)*

Prayer

Almighty God,
who sent your servant John the Baptist
to prepare your people to welcome the Messiah,
inspire us, the ministers and stewards of your truth,
to turn our disobedient hearts to you,
that when the Christ shall come again to be our judge,
we may stand with confidence before his glory;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

7 *Luke 1.26–38 (Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you)*

Prayer

Pour your grace into our hearts, O Lord,
that we who have known the incarnation
of your Son Jesus Christ,
announced by an angel to the Virgin Mary,
may by his cross and passion
be brought to the glory of his resurrection;
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

8 *Luke 1.39–46 or 1.39–56 (My soul magnifies the Lord)*

Prayer

Almighty God,
who looked with favour on your servant Mary,
and called her to be the mother of your Son,
nurture in us the humility and gentleness
that found favour in your sight,
that with her we may proclaim the greatness of your name
and find the mercy you show to those who fear you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

9 *Luke 1.57–80 (Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favourably on his people and redeemed them)*

Prayer

Almighty God,
you called John the Baptist
to give witness to the coming of your Son
and to prepare his way.
Give your people wisdom to see your purpose,
and openness to hear your will,
that we too may witness to Christ's coming
and so prepare his way;
through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

10 *Luke 2.1–20 (To you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord)*

Prayer

O God our Father,
whose Word has come among us
in the Holy Child of Bethlehem,
may the light of faith illumine our hearts
and shine in our words and deeds;
through him who is Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

11 *Luke 2.21–35 (My eyes have seen your salvation)*

Prayer

Almighty God,
you have shed upon us the new light
of your incarnate Word.
May this light, enkindled in our hearts,
shine forth in our lives;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

12 *Hebrews 1.1–12 (In these last days God has spoken to us by a Son)*

Prayer

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light,
look favourably on your whole Church,
that wonderful and sacred mystery.
By the effectual working of your providence,
carry out in tranquillity the plan of salvation.
Let the whole world see and know
that things which were cast down are being raised up,
and things which had grown old are being made new,
and that all things are being brought to their perfection
by him through whom all things were made,
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
who lives and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

13 *John 1.1–18 (To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God)*

Prayer

Eternal Wisdom, creating, ordering, and saving,
we give you thanks that we have seen you
in the selfless love of Jesus Christ.
Now reign within our minds and hearts,
and mobilize our will,
that by your power and through our hands
this world may be re-made
to be the garden and the city of your glory.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

A brief sermon or reflection on the readings may be given.

Incarnation Litany*

(In joy and humility let us pray to the creator of the universe,
saying, “Lord, grant us peace.”)

By the good news of our salvation brought to Mary by the angel,
hear us, O Lord.

Lord, grant us peace.

By the mystery of the Word made flesh, hear us, O Lord.

Lord, grant us peace.

By the birth in time of your timeless Son, hear us, O Lord.

Lord, grant us peace.

By the manifestation of your radiant glory to the shepherds and
magi, hear us, O Lord,

Lord, grant us peace.

By the submission of the maker of the world to Mary and Joseph
of Nazareth, hear us, O Lord.

Lord, grant us peace.

By the baptism of the Son of God in the river Jordan, hear us,
O Lord.

Lord, grant us peace.

Grant that the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdom of our Saviour Jesus Christ; hear us, O Lord.

Lord, grant us peace.

Silence may be kept.

Collect

Almighty God,
you wonderfully created
and yet more wonderfully restored our human nature.
May we share the divine life of your Son Jesus Christ,
who humbled himself to share our humanity,
and now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Then the leader shall say,

With joy in our hearts, let us gather our prayers in the words our Saviour taught us.

All

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

Or

Leader And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us,
we are bold to say,

All

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

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

Blessing

May the God of infinite goodness
scatter the darkness of sin
and brighten your hearts with holiness;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Easter Festival of Readings and Music

Concerning the Occasion

An Easter Festival of Readings and Music may be held at any time during the Easter season, except that it shall not replace the Easter Vigil.

When an Easter Festival of Readings and Music takes place in the evening, it may begin with the Service of Light (p. 61 in The Book of Alternative Services), Christ our Passover (p. 50 in The Book of Alternative Services) or The Song of Moses (Canticle 1 on p. 75 in The Book of Alternative Services) or Jesus Christ is Lord (Canticle 22 on p. 91f in The Book of Alternative Services) may replace O Gracious Light. The Resurrection Thanksgiving on p. 65 in The Book of Alternative Services follows. The service may continue with a bidding (example follows), and readings interspersed with thematically related seasonal hymns, carols, canticles, responsories, and anthems. It may conclude with the Easter Litany, an appropriate collect, the Lord's Prayer, and a seasonal blessing.

When an Easter Festival of Readings and Music is held in the morning or early afternoon, it may begin with the Resurrection Introductory Responses p. 97 in The Book of Alternative Services) and an appropriate hymn or canticle. The service may then continue as described above.

When an Easter Festival of Readings and Music is combined with the eucharist, the service begins with the Easter greeting (p. 185 in The Book of Alternative Services). A selection of readings interspersed with thematically related seasonal hymns, canticles, responsories, and anthems may be used as the Proclamation of the Word. The Easter Litany may be used as the Prayers of the People. The Lord's Prayer is used only after the eucharistic prayer.

The following material may be adapted as appropriate. Traditional vigil services consist of at least three readings and not more than nine readings. When an Easter Festival of Readings and Music is combined with the eucharist, the final reading, at least, is from one of the Gospels.

Easter Festival of Readings and Music

A Bidding for Easter

My sisters and brothers,
as we celebrate Christ's rising from the dead,
let us call the whole universe to share our joy:
heaven, earth,
men, women, children,
mountains, prairies, oceans, rivers,
birds and beasts, wild and tame,
everything that moves, stands, grows, or sits still.

Out of darkness has come light,
out of bitter sweet, out of evil good.
For evil scatters,
shame runs away,
innocence blooms once more,
we sing in our chains,
we embrace in our fear,
we kneel in deep quietude,
we thrill in stillness.

As we hear the story of our salvation,
speech fails.
In silence and in music
let us bring before the Source of life and light
our awe and wonder,
our joy and laughter,
our thanks and praise,
our everlasting adoration.

Silence may be kept before the first reading.

The Readings

Festivals of Readings and Music are based historically on liturgies composed of nine readings, but fewer readings are often chosen. Usually each reading is read by a different person.

The lessons may be read in the same manner as in the Daily Offices (pp. 51 and 67 in The Book of Alternative Services), or they may be read without introduction or conclusion. Each reading maybe followed by a period of silence, a prayer, or both, and then by an appropriate musical response.

- 1 *Genesis 1.1–5 or Genesis 1.1—2.4 (In the beginning God ... created the heavens and the earth)*

Prayer

Almighty and eternal God,
you created all things in wonderful beauty and order.
Help us now to perceive
how still more wonderful is the new creation,
by which in the fullness of time
you redeemed your people
through the sacrifice of our Passover, Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

- 2 *Exodus 14.19–31 (Thus the Lord saved Israel that day)*

Prayer

God of steadfast love,
your wonderful deeds of old shine forth even to our own day.
By the power of your mighty arm
you once delivered your chosen people
from slavery under Pharaoh,
to be a sign for us of the salvation of all nations
by the water of baptism.
Grant that all the peoples of the earth
may be numbered among the offspring of Abraham,
and rejoice in the inheritance of Israel.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

- 3 *Isaiah 35.1–10 (A highway shall be there ... and the ransomed of the Lord shall return)*

Prayer

Praise to you, God of our salvation.
Your generous gifts surpass all that we can ask or imagine.
You have delivered us from the exile of sin
and restored us to new life in Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Glory and honour and praise to you
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

- 4 *Ezekiel 37.1–14 (I am going to open your graves.
and I will bring you back to the land)*

Prayer

Living God,
by the Passover of your Son
you have brought us out of sin into righteousness,
out of death into life.
Grant to those who are sealed by your Holy Spirit
the will and power to proclaim you to all the world;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

- 5 *Jeremiah 31.10–14 (He who scattered Israel will gather)*

Prayer

Glory to you, Jesus Christ, our good shepherd.
In the waters of baptism you give us new birth,
at your table you nourish us with heavenly food,
and in your goodness and mercy
you guide us beyond the terrors of evil and death
to your Father's home to dwell in eternal light.
Glory to you for ever. **Amen.**

- 6 *Zephaniah 3.14–20 (At that time I will bring you home ... when I
restore your fortunes before your eyes)*

Prayer

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light,
look favourably on your whole Church,
that wonderful and sacred mystery.
By the effectual working of your providence,
carry out in tranquillity the plan of salvation.
Let the whole world see and know
that things which were cast down are being raised up,
and things which had grown old are being made new,
and that all things are being brought to their perfection
by him through whom all things were made,
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

- 7 *1 Corinthians 15.1–11,20–28,51–58 (Death has been swallowed up
in victory)*

Prayer

O God, who brought your people out of slavery
with a mighty hand,
strengthen us to take our stand with you
beside the oppressed of the world,
that in the victory of Christ
every fetter of body, mind, and spirit
may be broken,
and the whole human family,
restored to your image,
may sing your praise in joy, freedom, and peace;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

8 *Romans 8.35–39 (We are more than conquerors through him who loved us)*

Prayer

Blessed are you, O God,
through the weakness of Jesus Christ
you have bound us to yourself.
By his weakness you have given us the victory,
by his humility you have raised us up,
you sustain us by your love.
Glory and praise to you for ever and ever. **Amen.**

9 *Colossians 3.1–4,12–17 (So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above)*

Prayer

Merciful God,
you have prepared for those who love you
riches beyond imagination.
Pour into our hearts such love toward you,
that we, loving you above all things,
may obtain your promises,
which exceed all that we can desire;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

10 *1 Peter 1.3–8,21 (He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ)*

Prayer

God of our salvation,
in the time of trial keep our eyes fixed on you,
that we may always be ready to give voice
to the living hope in which we are reborn,
through Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

11 *Revelation 21.1–7 (I saw ... the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God)*

Prayer

God, source and future of the earth,
enlighten our hope by the vision of your holy city.
Be among us as our light and our temple,
our solace and our eternal life;
we ask this through Jesus Christ
the pioneer of our salvation,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

12 *John 6.35–40 (I am the bread of life)*

Prayer

Almighty God,
your Son Jesus Christ fed the hungry
with the bread of his life
and the word of his kingdom.
Renew your people with your heavenly grace,
and in all our weakness
sustain us by your true and living bread,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

13 *John 11.17–27 (I am the resurrection and the life)*

Prayer

Almighty God,
your Son came into the world
to free us all from sin and death.
Breathe upon us with the power of your Spirit,
that we may be raised to new life in Christ,
and serve you in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

One of the following narratives of the resurrection may be read, and may be followed by an appropriate prayer.

14 *Matthew 28.1–10 (He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said)*

15 *Mark 16.1–8 (He has been raised, he is not here)*

16 *Luke 24.1–9 (Why do you look for the living among the dead?)*

17 *John 20.1–18 (I have seen the Lord)*

Prayer

Almighty and eternal God,
the strength of those who believe
and the hope of those who doubt,
may we, who have not seen, have faith
and receive the fullness of Christ's blessing,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The following are resurrection appearances.

18 *Luke 24.13–35 (He had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread)*

Prayer

O God,
your Son made himself known to his disciples
in the breaking of bread.
Open the eyes of our faith,
that we may see him in his redeeming work,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

19 *Luke 24.36–53 (You are witnesses of these things)*

Prayer

O God of peace,
who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ,
that great shepherd of the sheep,
by the blood of the eternal covenant,
make us perfect in every good work to do your will,
and work in us that which is well-pleasing in your sight;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

20 *Matthew 28.16–20 (All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me)*

Prayer

God of new and abundant life,
fill us with the Spirit of love,
and unite us in faith,
that we may be witnesses to the resurrection
and show your glory to all the world,
in the name of Jesus Christ the risen Lord. **Amen.**

21 *John 20.19–29 (Peace be with you)*

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
you said to your apostles,
“Peace I give to you; my own peace I leave with you.”
Regard not our sins, but the faith of your Church,
and give to us the peace and unity of that heavenly city,
where with the Father and the Holy Spirit
you live and reign,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

22 *John 21.1–14 (They knew it was the Lord)*

Prayer

God of new beginnings,
we give you thanks for Jesus Christ,
the sunrise of our human race,
who calls us to share in his eternal banquet.
Give us grace to hearken gladly to his call.
We ask this in his name and for his sake. **Amen.**

23 *John 21.15–19 (Follow me)*

Prayer

Almighty God,
your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.
Give us grace to love one another
and walk in the way of his commandments,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

A brief sermon or reflection on the readings may be given.

Easter Litany

(In joy and hope let us pray to the source of all life, saying, “ Hear us, Lord of glory!”)

That we may be filled with the joy of Christ’s holy and life-giving resurrection, let us pray to the Lord.

Hear us, Lord of glory!

That Christians who are persecuted and oppressed may find fresh strength in the Easter Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.

Hear us, Lord of glory!

That we may find grace to be subject to one another in Christian love, let us pray to the Lord.

Hear us, Lord of glory!

That we may discover new and just ways of sharing the goods of the earth with those who lack food, work, or shelter, let us pray to the Lord.

Hear us, Lord of glory!

That through the grace of God the human family will abolish war and destructive exploitation of the earth, that all may live in peace and plenty, let us pray to the Lord.

Hear us, Lord of glory!

That those who are sick, weak, and dying may be comforted and strengthened by the power of the risen Christ, let us pray to the Lord.

Hear us, Lord of glory!

That God will send the fire of the Holy Spirit upon us, that we may bear faithful witness to Christ’s resurrection, let us pray to the Lord.

Hear us, Lord of glory!

Silence may be kept.

Collect

Lord of life and power,
through the mighty resurrection of your Son,
you have overcome the old order of sin and death
and have made all things new in him.

May we, being dead to sin
and alive to you in Jesus Christ,
reign with him in glory,
who with you and the Holy Spirit is alive,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Then the leader shall say,

With joy in our hearts for the victory of Christ,
let us complete our prayer
to the God of our salvation.

All

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

Or

Leader And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us,
we are bold to say,

All

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

Blessing

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

Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath marks the passage of the weeks of the season of Advent. It was originally devised to encourage family observance of Advent and was introduced to congregational worship only to provide a model for family use.

The lighting of one, two, three, then four candles during the weeks of Advent is a reminder that we await Jesus Christ, the Light of the World. To wait for Jesus is to be ready to meet him in all the ways he comes. It is important that Christians observe Advent not only as a time of preparation for Christmas but also in realization that Christ's coming kingdom stands in judgement over the injustices of our present world.

When the Advent wreath is used in church, the appropriate number of candles is lit before the liturgy begins. No special prayers, readings, or ceremonies normally accompany the lighting of the Advent candles. When the Service of Light is used at Evening Prayer during Advent, the wreath may be the symbolic focus of the service as described on p. 60 of *The Book of Alternative Services*.

The Advent wreath is an appropriate focus for devotions at home during Advent, especially when people gather for the main meal of the day. The order for Home Prayers (pp. 686f in *The Book of Alternative Services*) is recommended. When scripture passages are to be read, one of the lessons of the day in the Daily Office Lectionary (pp. 450ff) may be used. When young children are present some other plan of bible reading or bible stories may be helpful.

Liturgies of Membership

Public Welcome of New Members to a Congregation

Concerning the Occasion

If it is desired to welcome new members to a congregation publicly, it is suitable that they be introduced in the following manner.

Immediately before the Peace, the new members are introduced briefly, preferably by a member of the congregation, and may be asked to come forward.

The celebrant then begins the exchange of the Peace, in the course of which those who have been introduced are greeted personally by the celebrant and members of the congregation as convenient.

Public Welcome of New Members to a Congregation

The following petitions may be included in the Prayers of the People.

The following petition may be added after the third petition in the first Litany, or after the first petition in the sixth Litany (The Book of Alternative Services, pp. 110 and 115 respectively).

For our community and for NN (or N) who *are* new among us, let us pray to the Lord.

The following petition maybe added after the second petition in the third Litany (The Book of Alternative Services, p. 113).

We pray for the community of faith gathered here, that we may welcome and support NN (or N) who *have* recently come among us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

The following petition may be added as part of the fifth petition in the fourth Litany (The Book of Alternative Services, p. 114).

We pray for one another, especially for NN (or N) who *have* entered our faith community: may we always be united in service and love.

Lord, hear and have mercy.

When Members Leave a Congregation

Concerning the Occasion

When members are leaving a congregation, it is suitable that, on their last Sunday, the fact be mentioned before the Prayers of the People, and that they be prayed for by name in those Prayers.

They are greeted personally by the celebrant and lay officials of the congregation at the time of the Peace, or at the end of the service.

When Members Leave a Congregation

The following petitions may be included in the Prayers of the People.

The following petition maybe added after the third petition in the first Litany, or after the first petition in the sixth Litany (The Book of Alternative Services, pp. 110 and 115 respectively).

For this community and for NN (or N) who are leaving us, that we may always be united in service and love, let us pray to the Lord.

The following petition maybe added after the second petition in the third Litany (The Book of Alternative Services, p. 113).

We pray for the community of faith gathered here, and for NN (or N) who are leaving us: may they find welcome and support in a new community.

Lord, hear our prayer.

The following petition may be added as part of the fifth petition in the fourth Litany (The Book of Alternative Services, p. 114).

We pray for one another, especially for NN (or N) who are leaving: may we always be united in service and love.

Lord, hear and have mercy.

See also, "For a Member Leaving Home," The Book of Alternative Services, p. 696.

Guidelines on Worship Involving Christians and People of Other Faith Traditions

Historical

Anglicans are increasingly invited to participate in worship with people of other faith traditions, in the context of a multi-cultural society and also against the background of growing dialogue with representatives of some other faith traditions. Guidelines for interfaith dialogue were commended to the Church by the General Synod in 1986¹. Interfaith dialogue is a long process and it is not always easy for a number of reasons: it lacks the definable goal of corporate union that characterizes Christian ecumenism; it is not an appropriate forum for Christian evangelism (with which it is sometimes confused); the histories of the various faith communities have sometimes included distortion, mutual condemnation, and persecution; sometimes it is hard to find a common language to speak of the divine; cultural presuppositions may be confused with religious practice and thought by both Christians and others; some Christians question the need for dialogue when the real agenda is, for them, conversion. These and other difficulties should be acknowledged. Our dialogue partners face the same problems. Dialogue must be open, honest, and realistic, and we should not avoid difficult issues simply to avoid disagreement. Mere sentimentalism can, in the long run, be destructive of good relationships.

At the same time, dialogue has proven to be rewarding for both partners in many situations. We come to understand our own tradition better when we have to articulate it to others, and our partners may frequently reflect back to us elements of our tradition that we have neglected. Dialogue may be a forum in which prejudice may be overcome and the past may be healed. In a world in which inter-religious tension often leads to violence, the presence of dialogue among these traditions is a sign of hope.

1 *Guidelines for Interfaith Dialogue*, Ecumenical Office of the Anglican Church of Canada, 80 Hayden Street, Toronto, ON M4Y 3G2, 1988.

Contexts

In the course of dialogue partners are frequently drawn to worship together, which may raise new difficulties and opportunities. But increasingly, interfaith worship takes place in a variety of contexts:

- civic events on commemorative occasions;
- special events celebrating community needs identified by the religious communities or arising from their response to the expressed concerns of the larger community;
- special liturgies at the time of crises and disasters;
- worship at multi-faith events organized by religious communities;
- the installation of professional caregivers in clinical, academic, and correctional institutions;
- in the programs of other organizations that wish to have a religious expression in their events.

As a multi-cultural society grows, other contexts will present themselves. These guidelines are offered to help Anglicans reflect on the issues raised by these opportunities and their practical implications for worship events.

Theological

When people of faith gather to worship together we do so understanding ourselves to be in relationship to the ultimate mystery of the source and end of being, which Christians name as the Triune God, although others name that reality in other terms. Christians who participate in worship with members of other traditions do so in acknowledgement of the possibility that the presence of God may be mediated through traditions other than their own.

Worship includes symbolic actions, words, and objects, which may mediate the presence of God even to those to whom they are unfamiliar. This may be true for Christians of the symbols of other faiths. At the same time, symbols may also be startling and may block this mediation, which has happened with Christian symbols even within Christianity and may happen with Christian symbols in other faith communities as well as with their symbols for

Christians. It is important to remember that symbols are never the objects of worship but are expressions of worship, in which the aspirations and experiences of the worshippers may be focused and enlarged. Worship may take both outer and inner forms: in some traditions symbolic and ritual actions are central, while in other traditions mediation and contemplation are the primary form of worship activity.

The primary purpose of interfaith worship is not to educate one another in our various forms of worship (important as that may be), but to stand together in relationship to the ultimate mystery and to one another in a given context. This combination of dimensions means that we are bound together not only before the ultimate mystery but also in a community of ethical responsibility.

We are at a crossroads in history and we cannot predetermine the effects of dialogue. We cannot establish a fixed theological tradition in which we make judgements about other traditions. As we enter a process of dialogue and approach relationships of worship, it may be helpful to ask ourselves questions like these:

- What is our theology of ritual?
- What is our theology of symbols? What is the significance of symbolic objects in our own tradition and how does that relate to the symbolic objects of other traditions?
- Can we see ourselves united in prayer beyond the words and symbols we are using?
- Can we, in worship, affirm the particularity of Christ and be involved at the same time in events which express God's purpose in all people? Can we live with this ambiguity? Can our partners?
- Some Christians assume that all worship is to God through Christ, which presents problems in traditions that have no developed theology of the identity of God and do not accept the mediation of Jesus Christ.

Religion and culture are always intimately related, whether they reflect or confront one another. When religion reflects the culture of its context, the cultural elements are very difficult to discern. People seldom recognize that their religious practice may reinforce their cultural assumptions. Those involved in interfaith worship

should be sensitive to the cultural dimensions of their own religious practice, as well as those of others.

Models

There are three models of interfaith worship: exclusive, inclusive, and pluralistic. The exclusive model, in which worship is the expression of only one faith tradition, is not true multi-faith worship. The inclusive or integrated model seeks to find a common expression with which representatives of the various traditions are comfortable. In the pluralist model the different traditions and practices of the respective groups are brought together side by side in a single act of worship. In either of these latter two models it should be the responsibility of members of a faith tradition to identify those aspects of their own practice that should be used in interfaith worship; those outside a tradition should not impose its elements on the community event.

Guidelines for Planning

- Care needs to be taken that planners and leaders of interfaith events represent their traditions authentically. Anglicans who find themselves as Christian representatives on an interfaith planning committee should attempt to represent the sensitivities of the broader Christian community.
- Interfaith worship events should be planned by representatives of all of the traditions that will be involved.
- Sufficient time should be taken to allow mutual understanding and respect to grow.
- Some events (e.g., commemorative civic events) may take six months to a year to plan.
- Community building should be encouraged.
- Those involved should be encouraged to develop a brief, clear statement of their faith as preparation for planning.
- Planners should formulate clearly the purpose of the event.
- Planners should be sensitive to the appropriateness of the location and its symbolic decoration, especially if it is necessary to use a religious building for a civic event.

- When symbols proper to one faith tradition are used in an interfaith worship event, care should be taken to explain them to members of other traditions.
- Symbols, including language, that are likely to cause great discomfort should not be used.

Participation

Participation in the worship of another tradition does not indicate consent or agreement but respect. Leaders of particular traditions should indicate appropriate levels of participation in their rites; participants should make their own decisions on the level of participation appropriate to them as an act of their own informed consciences. Christians may not wish to participate in certain prayers, to consume sacred foods, or perform certain gestures.

Participants should be sensitive to matters of dress (e.g., removal of shoes and covering of the head), deportment, and the possibility of gender separation. They should seek education in the practice of a faith tradition before attending, by consulting members of the faith tradition, their public library, or other informed sources.

Guidelines for Interfaith Dialogue

The following *Guidelines for Interfaith Dialogue* were produced October 1988 by the Ecumenical Office, Anglican Church of Canada, 80 Hayden Street, Toronto, ON M4Y 3G2.

Guidelines for Interfaith Dialogue

These guidelines are offered to Canadian Anglicans as they seek to reach out to their neighbours of other faiths. Our approach has two separate, but inter-related aspects: dialogue, which includes growing in our knowledge of each other and a mutual sharing of spiritual insights; and common action which would involve joint efforts to deal with issues related to life together in society, but might also include activities of a devotional nature.

A The Path of Dialogue

1 Meet the people themselves and get to know their traditions.

In many Canadian communities there are places of worship of the world's great religions. Several of these religious communities have national or regional organizations, and frequently people with responsibility for interfaith dialogue and cooperation. There are also bodies that have as their purpose the fostering of better relationships among people of different faith communities.

2 Wherever possible, engage in dialogue ecumenically.

When we seek to explain ourselves to others the differences between Christians take on a different perspective. An ecumenical approach to dialogue allows us to focus on those things which are essential in Christian teaching. While individual approaches need not be discouraged, a ministerial or local council of churches might well be the appropriate body to initiate dialogue. Generally, dialogue is best done by representatives of several churches at the same time.

3 Allow others to speak for themselves.

Too often stereotypes have kept us apart from people of other faiths. One obvious way of avoiding this is to let the dialogue partners describe themselves, as we expect to speak for ourselves. This is not to say that our listening must always be uncritical. Our questions

will only be accepted as we show that we want to learn and understand. One way to ensure this kind of balance is to involve dialogue partners in the planning process itself.

- 4 Be aware of other loyalties.** We always bring into relationships a cluster of theological commitments and cultural loyalties. An awareness of this can avoid unrealistic expectations, and can help focus on central rather than peripheral issues. Acknowledgement of our own and others' loyalties can pave the way to deeper sharing.
- 5 Prepare carefully for the dialogue.** No dialogue venture will be successful without sensitive planning and preparation.
 - a It is important to approach others with the same kind of respect we would wish to be accorded. They cherish their beliefs and practices as deeply as we do our own, however different they may appear to us.
 - b Every religious tradition, including our own, has unworthy adherents and unpleasant episodes in its history. True dialogue is not possible if only the best of one tradition is contrasted with the worst of others.
 - c Issues of separation must be addressed as well as those of unity. Dialogue is not furthered when painful or difficult areas are glossed over. However, this should not be done with an attitude of superiority or solely in an effort to air grievances. It should include an awareness of our own contribution to division and misunderstanding.
 - d By engaging in dialogue Christians are not being asked to compromise their faith that God was revealed in the person of Christ. Their understanding of their own faith should be clear, so that the Christian perspective can be fairly presented to dialogue partners. Dialogue, however, should not be a subtle form of proselytizing, but an occasion for mutual sharing.

B The Path of Common Action

1 Deal with issues related to living together as part of the human community.

This may well be the basis upon which dialogue begins. Our planet is too small and the problems confronting it too great for people of faith to attempt to work in isolation or from a position

of conflict. Some matters on which interfaith cooperation is possible include:

- a Joint approaches to government on matters of economic, social, political, and cultural concern.
- b Urging respect for human rights and religious freedom not only for ourselves but for others also.
- c Coordinated efforts to deal with global issues such as world peace, the environment, or hunger.

2 Foster efforts at education and communication between people of different faiths.

Education is both a consequence of and a way into interfaith dialogue. The effort to learn and understand will bring us into closer contact, while that contact will lead us to want to share our learning with others.

- a In our pluralist society it is important that people have an appreciation of the rich religious heritage of those who make up our community. People are pleased, for example, when their major religious festivals are acknowledged. These can provide the occasion for learning more about the faith concerned.
- b Sustained contact with people of other faiths can begin to break down false images with which many of us have grown up, and to which we are still often exposed. Efforts should be made to challenge such stereotypes wherever they may be encountered, including those in our own educational and liturgical material.
- c Among the places on which such educational efforts can be focused are: schools, universities, and other institutions for adult education, seminaries, and church schools.
- d Inaccurate media coverage of minority religious groups can be detrimental. Positive relations should be developed with the media, so that their potential for increasing public awareness about people of different faiths can be fully utilized.
- e Efforts should also be made to sensitize travellers to the religious traditions of the countries they visit, and to encourage them to share their experiences on their return.

- f Representatives of other faith groups should be consulted, and where possible involved, in the preparation of educational material that touches on their history, beliefs, and practices.

3 Share spiritual insights and approaches.

There is much that religious people can share of their spiritual insights in an atmosphere of learning and openness. However, people of other traditions are no more anxious than we are to engage in acts of worship which blur very real differences of theology or worldview. Neither do they relish the appropriation by others of their religious symbols or sacred texts.

- a Attendance at another community's acts of worship should always be accompanied by careful preparation and an opportunity to ask questions afterward, preferably answered by members of that tradition.
- b Christians who are present during the worship of another faith community may be unable to participate fully in everything that is said and done, but they should attend with the attitude that the event is an important part of the spiritual life of the participants.
- c Prayer for people of other religious traditions is valuable, especially during times of particular need or when it is for better relationships with them. Some Christians feel that they should pray for the conversion of others to Christ, while others would argue that this should not be done. In any event it is God who converts people. Christians themselves are far from fully understanding or obeying God's will. It is inappropriate to single out any one religious group as being in particular need of conversion in a way that fosters prejudice against them.

Because the encounter with each group is distinctive there can be one set of guidelines which will cover all situations. Until our encounters reach the point of allowing each party to express freely its sense of spiritual reality, the meeting is more likely to be curious than serious. The simplest instruction may well be that of St. Augustine, based on Jesus' twofold commandment, which is to love God and do what you will. Love, in the sense of mutuality, means that as we would share what is most precious to us, the gift in Christ Jesus, so we must invite others to share their treasures with us.

Prayers for Interfaith Gatherings

The society in which we live is increasingly described as “multicultural.” This means not only that our own church is composed more and more of people of many racial and cultural backgrounds, but also that we are surrounded by people who are nurtured in other religious traditions. We may expect to share with Jews, Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Buddhists, and others in social and civic occasions when it is appropriate for prayer to be offered in terms which are accessible to all those who seek and find God in creation and in the experience of transcendence. Such prayer may include invocations at the beginning of a ceremony or conference, blessings, and thanksgiving before and after sharing food. The following prayers are provided for such occasions, and also as models for those who must prepare prayers for particular circumstances.

Concerning the Occasion

These prayers may be used at meetings of Christians and people of other religious traditions. Other prayers may be used, but care should be taken to ensure that they are not offensive to any who are present.

Prayers for Interfaith Gatherings

Invocations

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation,
whose goodness fills our hearts with joy.
Blessed are you,
who have brought us together this day
to work in harmony and peace.
Strengthen us with your grace and wisdom
for you are God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

In you, Lord our God,
all things have their beginning, continuation, and end.
Grace us with your saving presence,
aid us with your constant help
and let us glorify you,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

Gracious God, may everything we do
begin with your inspiration
and continue with your help,
so that all our prayers and works
may begin in you
and by you be happily ended.
Glory and praise to you,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Blessings

May the God of every grace and blessing
grant you joy and peace.
May you rejoice in God's protection,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

May God strengthen you
and bring your work to completion.
May hope accompany your journey
through the days to come.
May God's abiding presence be with you
all the days of your life. **Amen.**

May the Lord bless you and take care of you.
May the Lord be kind and gracious to you;
May the Lord look on you with favour and give you peace.
Amen.

Grace at Meals

Blessed are you, Lord our God,
ruler of the universe;
you give us food from the earth. **Amen.**

Creator of the universe,
you give us this gift of food
to nourish us and give us life.
Bless this food that you have made
and human hands have prepared.
May it satisfy our hunger,
and in sharing it together
may we come closer to one another.
Blessed are you for food and for life. **Amen.**

For what we are about to receive,
may God make us truly thankful. **Amen.**

The eyes of all wait upon you, O Lord,
And you give them their food in due season.

You open wide your hand
And satisfy the needs of every living creature.

Bless, O Lord, this food to our use
and bless us to your service,
and make us ever mindful of the needs of others. **Amen.**

For this our daily food,
and for every gift which comes from you, O God,
we bless your holy name. **Amen.**

For these and all our blessings,
God's holy name be praised. **Amen.**

Lord, may our fellowship be the revelation of your presence
and turn our daily bread into bread of life. **Amen.**

After a meal

Blessed are you, Lord our God,
ruler of the universe;
we have shared of your bounty,
and through your goodness we live. **Amen.**

Liturgies Relating to Marriage

Renewal of Marriage Vows or On the Anniversary of a Marriage

Concerning the Service

The service may take place in the home with friends and family, or at a special church service. The service may occasionally be shortened and adapted to commemorate special anniversaries during the Prayers of the People, but is not to be used as the principal Sunday liturgy.

The eucharist may be celebrated.

Renewal of Marriage Vows or On the Anniversary of a Marriage

The Gathering of the Community

The people stand. The celebrant greets the community.

Celebrant The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 and the love of God,
 and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
 be with you all.

People **And also with you.**

The celebrant may address the congregation in these or similar words.

Friends in Christ,
we are gathered together with *N* and *N*
who have come today to give thanks
for God's blessing upon them,
and to reaffirm their marriage covenant.

Let us pray.

Gracious and ever-living God,
look with favour on *N* and *N*
who come to renew the promises
they made at their wedding.
Grant them your blessing,
and assist them with your grace,
that with steadfast love
they may continue to honour
and keep their vows;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Or

Grant, O God, in your love,
that *N* and *N* who now reaffirm the covenant
which they have made with each other,
may continue to grow
in loyalty, love, and forgiveness;

and come at last to the eternal joys
which you have promised
through Jesus Christ our Lord;
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Proclamation of the Word

The Readings

Two or more readings, including a Gospel reading, shall normally be read. Members of the family and friends of the husband and wife may read the lessons. A psalm, canticle, hymn, anthem or period of silence may follow the lessons. Suggested readings may be found in The Book of Alternative Services (pp. 549–550). The readings and the response may be selected in consultation with the husband and wife.

A sermon may follow.

The husband and wife present themselves before the celebrant, who asks them in turn the following question, to which each immediately makes response.

*N, do you here,
in the presence of God and this congregation,
renew the commitment you made
when you bound yourself to N in holy marriage?*

Answer,

I do.

The husband and wife may say together,

Gracious God,
we remember with thanksgiving
our vows of love and commitment
to you and to each other in marriage.
We pray for your continued blessing.
May we learn from our joys and sorrows,
and discover new riches in our life together in you.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The celebrant then blesses them. The following form may be used.

N and N,
may the power of God keep you,
the love of God be in your life and work together,
the grace of God strengthen your love
that it may endure for ever. **Amen.**

The Prayers of the People

The Prayers of the People may be led by a friend or member of the family of the husband and wife, or by the celebrant, or another minister.

If the eucharist is celebrated, the gifts may be presented by the husband and wife.

If the eucharist is not celebrated, the Lord's Prayer and the Peace follow.

* * *

When this form is used where there has been a reconciliation in a marriage, the celebrant may adapt it in consultation with the husband and wife. The following prayer may be said by the couple.

God of peace,
forgive us as we forgive each other
for all the hurt we have brought into our lives.
Let your healing love
rest upon the wounds we have caused.
Deepen our love in a new understanding
for each other and for you.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ
who carried on his cross our discord and our grief. **Amen.**

Blessing of a Civil Marriage Form I

According to Western Christian thought the ministers of marriage are the man and woman who marry each other. From the point of view of the church the role of an ordained minister in a marriage service is to pray for God's blessing on the marriage which the man and woman minister to each other. (From the point of view of the state the minister may have other civil functions to perform.) An ordained minister offers the prayer of blessing because he or she is the appointed leader of the congregation assembled for this particular act of worship.

The church recognizes the validity of marriages which have been solemnized in accordance with its understanding of marriage, whether or not the exchange of vows took place in the context of an act of worship at which one of its ordained ministers presided. A civil ceremony at which a man and woman took each other as husband and wife with the intention of lifelong commitment is a complete and valid wedding. People enter marriage through the forms of civil ceremonies for a variety of reasons: because of cultural differences, to appease families, because they were not practising Christians at the time. Sometimes they later wish to affirm the Christian nature of their marriage by a ceremony which culminates in a solemn prayer for God's blessing on the marriage.

There is an intimate relationship between the vows of marriage and prayers of blessing which may follow them, even when there is a considerable interval of time between the two events. Nothing that is done in the blessing of a civil marriage should reflect negatively on the original exchange of vows. The blessing of a civil marriage is not a second marriage. The marriage vows should not be repeated.

This service should not be used in contravention of diocesan regulations relating to remarriage after divorce.

Blessing of a Civil Marriage

Form I

The Gathering of the Community

The people stand. The celebrant greets the community.

Minister The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 and the love of God,
 and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
 be with you all.

People **And also with you.**

The celebrant may address the congregation in these or similar words.

Friends in Christ
we are gathered together with N and N
who have come today to ask God
to bless them and their marriage.

Let us pray.
Gracious God,
you have taught us through your Son
that love is the fulfilling of the law.
Grant to these your servants
that loving one another
they may continue in your love
until their lives' end;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People **Amen.**

The Proclamation of the Word

The Readings

Two or more readings (one or more readings if the eucharist is not to be celebrated), including a Gospel reading, shall normally be read. Members of the family and friends of the husband and wife may read the lections. A psalm, canticle, hymn, anthem, or period of silence may follow the readings. Suggested readings may be found on pp. 549–550 in The Book of Alternative Services. The readings and the response shall be selected in consultation with the husband and wife.

At the conclusion of readings from the Old Testament, and New Testament lections other than the Gospels, the reader says,

The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Silence maybe kept. A psalm, hymn, or anthem may follow.

All stand for the Gospel.

Reader The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Reader The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to ...

People **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

At the conclusion of the Gospel, the reader says,

The Gospel of Christ.

People **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

A sermon may follow.

The husband and wife present themselves before the presiding minister, who asks them in turn the following question, to which each individually makes response.

N do you here,
in the presence of God and of this congregation,
affirm and renew the commitment you made
when you bound yourself to N in holy marriage?

Response I do,
and I ask God to bless our marriage.

The Prayers of the People

The Prayers of the People may be led by a friend or member of a family of the husband and wife, or by the celebrant or another minister.

Leader Let us pray.
Almighty God, in whom we live and move and
have our being, look graciously upon the world
which you have made and for which your Son
gave his life, and especially on all whom you
make to be one flesh in holy marriage. May their
lives together be a sacrament of your love to this

broken world, so that unity may overcome estrangement, forgiveness heal guilt, and joy overcome despair.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Leader May N and N so continue in marriage that the strength of their love may enrich our common life and be a sign of your faithfulness.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Leader May those who have come to join N and N in prayer for God's blessing find their lives strengthened and their loyalties confirmed.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Other suitable prayers may be offered.

The Blessing of the Marriage

The people remain standing. The husband and wife kneel, and the celebrant says one of the following prayers.

Most gracious God, we give you thanks for your tender love in sending Jesus Christ to come among us, to be born of a human mother, and to make the way of the cross to be the way of life. We thank you, also, for consecrating the union of man and woman in his name. By the power of your Holy Spirit, pour out the abundance of your blessing upon this man and this woman.

Defend them from every enemy. Lead them into all peace. Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts, a mantle about their shoulders, and a crown upon their foreheads. Bless them in their work and in their companionship; in their sleeping and in their waking; in their joys and in their sorrows; in their life and in their death. Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that table where your saints feast for ever in your heavenly home; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever.

People **Amen.**

Or

Celebrant O God, you have so consecrated the covenant of marriage that in it is represented the spiritual unity between Christ and his Church. Send therefore your blessing upon these your servants, that they may so love, honour, and cherish each other in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

The husband and wife still kneeling, the celebrant adds this blessing.

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, bless, preserve, and keep you; the Lord look upon you with favour and fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace; that you may faithfully live together in this life, and in the age to come have life everlasting.

People **Amen.**

If the eucharist is not to be celebrated, the Lord's Prayer (p. 211 in The Book of Alternative Services) is said at this time.

The congregation stands.

The Peace

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

Members of the congregation, husband and wife, ministers and people, may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

The Celebration of the Eucharist

The Preparation of the Gifts

If the eucharist is to be celebrated, the service continues with the preparation of the gifts. The bread and wine may be presented to the celebrant by the husband and wife.

The Prayer Over the Gifts

When the gifts have been prepared, the celebrant may say the Prayer over the Gifts, as follows.

God of the covenant, hear our prayer,
and accept all we offer you this day.
You have made N and N
one in the sacrament of marriage.
May the mystery of Christ's unselfish love,
which we celebrate in this eucharist,
increase their love for you and for each other;
through Christ our Lord.

People **Amen.**

The Great Thanksgiving

The celebrant continues with the Great Thanksgiving. Either Eucharistic Prayer 1 on pp. 193–195 in The Book of Alternative Services or the eucharistic prayer on pp. 536–538 in The Book of Alternative Services is appropriate. At the conclusion of the Great Thanksgiving the Lord's Prayer is said.

The Lord's Prayer

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

Or

Celebrant And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us,
we are bold to say,

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

Silence

The Breaking of the Bread

The celebrant breaks the consecrated bread for distribution, and may say,

We break the bread of life,
and that life is the light of the world.

All **God here among us,
light in the midst of us,
bring us to light and life.**

The Communion

The celebrant invites the people to share in communion and may say,

Celebrant The gifts of God for the People of God.

People **Thanks be to God.**

The celebrant receives the sacrament first and then delivers it to the husband and wife, and to such of the congregation as wish to receive communion.

The sacrament is given with the following words.

The body of Christ (given for you).

The blood of Christ (shed for you).

Or

The body of Christ, the bread of heaven.

The blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.

The communicant responds each time, Amen.

Prayer after Communion

Celebrant Let us pray.

Standing, the congregation prays in silence. The celebrant then says,

Gracious God,
may N and N, who are bound together
in these holy mysteries,
continue in one heart and soul.
May they live in fidelity and peace
and obtain those eternal joys
prepared for all who love you;
through your Son, Jesus Christ the Lord.

People **Amen.**

Then the following doxology may be said.

Celebrant Glory to God,
People **whose power, working in us,
can do infinitely more
than we can ask or imagine.
Glory to God from generation to generation,
in the Church and in Christ Jesus,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Dismissal

The celebrant may bless the people. The deacon, or other leader, dismisses the people saying,

Leader Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

From Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost, Alleluia may be added to the dismissal and the people's response.

Blessing and Celebration After a Civil Marriage Form II

In 1964 *The Canadian Book of Occasional Offices* was published at the request of the House of Bishops. Among the rites contained in the book was "The Blessing of a Civil Marriage." At that time the rite was authorized for use when a priest was satisfied "that the Marriage is worthy of the Church's blessing." The rite was quite simple, with the priest asking the couple to promise lifelong fidelity, after which a series of prayers asked for God's grace and blessing of the marriage.

When *The Book of Alternative Services* was authorized for use in the Anglican Church of Canada, the Doctrine and Worship Committee of the General Synod recognized the need for a book of occasional celebrations in the spirit and language of the alternative rites. In 1992 *Occasional Celebrations of the Anglican Church of Canada* appeared with a short rite for the "Blessing of a Civil Marriage." Following the example of the 1964 book, the rite simply asked the couple to "affirm and renew the commitment" made in their marriage. A series of prayers for the couple then followed, concluding with the nuptial blessing and, if desired, the celebration of the eucharist.

The General Synod of 2001 requested that a new rite for the blessing and celebration of a civil marriage be produced for presentation at the General Synod of 2004. The Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee of General Synod reviewed the existing text and created a more expansive liturgy. General Synod 2004 resolved to "authorize the *Blessing and Celebration After a Civil Marriage* (between a man and a woman) for use where permitted by the local Ordinary. The title, "Blessing and Celebration After a Civil Marriage" reflects the church's recognition of the validity of marriages that have been solemnized in accordance with its understanding of marriage, whether or not the exchange of vows took place in the context of an act of worship presided over by an ordained minister. (The role of an ordained minister in the marriage service is to pray for God's blessing on the marriage. The ministers of the marriage are the man and the woman who marry each other.)

Members of the Ministry and Worship Working Group 2001–2004: the Rt. Rev'd Fred Hiltz, the Ven. Jane Humphreys, Mr. Dion Lewis, the Rev'd Michael Mills, Canon Murray Still, the Very Rev'd Peter Wall.

Blessing and Celebration After a Civil Marriage

Form II

The Gathering of the Community

The people stand. The couple stands before the presiding minister (presider), who shall be a priest or a bishop.

Presider The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with you all.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Dear Friends, we have come together in the presence of God to celebrate the marriage of N and N and to rejoice with them.

Marriage is a gift of God and a means of his grace, in which man and woman become one flesh. It is God's purpose that, as husband and wife give themselves to each other in love, they shall grow together and be united in that love, as Christ is united with his Church.

The union of man and woman in heart, body, and mind is intended for their mutual comfort and help, that they may know each other with delight and tenderness in acts of love [and that they may be blessed in the procreation, care, and upbringing of children].

In marriage, husband and wife give themselves to each other, to care for each other in good times and in bad. They are linked to each other's families, and they begin a new life in the community.

It is a way of life that all should reverence, and none should undertake lightly.

We pray with them that by God's help *N* and *N* may fulfill his purpose for the whole of their earthly life together.

Let us pray.

God our Father,
you have taught us through your Son
that love is the fulfilling of the law.
Grant to these your servants
that loving one another,
they may continue in your love
until their lives' end;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People

Amen.

The Proclamation of the Word

Two or three readings, including a Gospel reading, shall normally be read. Members of the family and friends of the couple may read lessons. A psalm, canticle, hymn, anthem, or period of silence may follow the lessons. Suggested readings may be found on p. 549 (BAS). The readings and the response shall be selected in consultation with the couple.

At the conclusion of readings from the Old Testament and the New Testament writings other than the Gospels, the reader says,

The word of the Lord.

People

Thanks be to God.

All stand for the Gospel.

Reader

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to ...

People

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

At the conclusion of the Gospel, the reader says,

The Gospel of Christ.

People

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

A sermon may follow.

The Blessing of the Marriage

The couple present themselves before the presiding minister, who asks them in turn the following question, to which each individually makes response.

N, do you here, in the presence of God and of this congregation, affirm and renew the commitment you made when you bound yourself to *N* in marriage?

Response I do.

Then the couple shall say together,

Acknowledging our union to be lifelong, until we are parted by death, we ask God to bless our marriage.

The people remain standing. The couple kneels, and the presiding minister says one of the following prayers.

Most gracious God,
we give you thanks for your tender love
in sending Jesus Christ to come among us,
to be born of a human mother,
and to make the way of the cross to be the way of life.
We thank you, also, for consecrating
the union of man and woman in his name.

By the power of your Holy Spirit,
pour out the abundance of your blessing
upon this man and this woman.

Defend them from every enemy.
Lead them into all peace.
Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts,
a mantle about their shoulders,
and a crown upon their foreheads.

Bless them in their work and in their companionship;
in their sleeping and in their waking;
in their joys and in their sorrows;
in their life and in their death.

Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that table
where your saints feast for ever in your heavenly home;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns,
one God, for ever and ever.

People **Amen.**

Or O God,
 you have so consecrated the covenant of marriage
 that in it is represented the spiritual unity
 between Christ and his Church.

 Send therefore your blessing upon these servants,
 that they may so love, honour, and cherish each other
 in faithfulness and patience,
 in wisdom and true godliness,
 that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.

People **Amen.**

The Giving and Receiving of Rings

If rings are to be given and received, the presiding minister receives the rings and addresses the congregation in these or similar words.

 Dear friends in Christ,
 let us ask God to bless these rings.

The community may pray silently. The presiding minister then says,

 Blessed are you,
 God of steadfast love,
 source of our joy and end of our hope.
 Bless these rings given and received
 that they may be symbols of the vow and covenant
 N and N have made in holy marriage,
 through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People **Amen.**

Each places the ring on the ring-finger of the other's hand and says,

 N, I give you this ring
 as a symbol of my vow.
 With all that I am and all that I have,
 I honour you in the name of God.

The presiding minister adds this blessing.

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit,
bless, preserve, and keep you;
the Lord look upon you with favour
and fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace;
that you may faithfully live together in this life,
and in the age to come have life everlasting.

People **Amen.**

The couple join right hands.

Those whom God has joined together let no one put
asunder.

People **Amen.**

The Prayers of the People

The Prayers of the People may be led by a friend or member of a family of the husband and wife, or by the presiding minister or another minister.

Leader Let us pray.

Almighty God,
in whom we live and move and have our being,
look graciously upon the world which you have made
and for which your Son gave his life,
and especially on all whom you make
to be one flesh in holy marriage.
May their lives together
be a sacrament of your love to this broken world,
so that unity may overcome estrangement,
forgiveness heal guilt,
and joy overcome despair.

People Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Leader May *N* and *N* so live together
that the strength of their love
may enrich our common life
and become a sign of your faithfulness.

People Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

[*Leader* May they receive the gifts and heritage of children
and the grace to bring them up to know and love you.

People Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.]

Leader May their home be a place of truth, security, and love;
and their lives an example of concern for others.

People Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Leader May those who have come to join
N and N in asking for God's blessing
find their lives strengthened
and their loyalties confirmed.

People Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

If the eucharist is not to be celebrated, the Lord's Prayer (p. C21) is said at this time.

The congregation stands.

The Peace

Presider The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

Members of the congregation, the couple, ministers and people, may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

The Celebration of the Eucharist

The Preparation of the Gifts

If the eucharist is to be celebrated, the service continues with the preparation of the gifts. The bread and wine may be presented by the couple.

The Prayer over the Gifts

When the gifts have been prepared, the celebrant may say the Prayer over the Gifts, as follows.

God of the covenant, hear our prayer,
and accept all we offer you this day.
You have made *N* and *N*
one in the sacrament of marriage.
May the mystery of Christ's unselfish love,
which we celebrate in this eucharist,
increase their love for you and for each other;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People **Amen.**

The Great Thanksgiving

The celebrant continues with the Great Thanksgiving. Eucharistic Prayer 1 on pp. 193–195 in The Book of Alternative Services is appropriate. At the conclusion of the Great Thanksgiving, the Lord's Prayer is said.

The Lord's Prayer

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

Or

Celebrant And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us,
we are bold to say,

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

**For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Silence

The Breaking of the Bread

The celebrant breaks the consecrated bread for distribution, and may say,

We break the bread of life,
And that life is the light of the world.

All **God here among us,
light in the midst of us,
bring us to light and life.**

The Communion

The celebrant invites the people to share in communion and may say,

Celebrant The gifts of God for the People of God.
People **Thanks be to God.**

The celebrant receives the sacrament first and then delivers it to the husband and wife, and to such of the congregation as wish to receive communion.

The sacrament is given with the following words,

The body of Christ (given for you).
The blood of Christ (shed for you).

Or The body of Christ, the bread of heaven.
 The blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.

*The communicant responds each time, **Amen.***

Prayer after Communion

Celebrant Let us pray.

Standing, the congregation prays in silence. The celebrant then says,

Gracious God,
may *N* and *N*, who are bound together
in these holy mysteries,
continue in one heart and soul.
May they live in fidelity and peace
and obtain the eternal joys
prepared for all who love you;
through your Son, Jesus Christ the Lord.

People **Amen.**

Then the following doxology may be said.

Celebrant Glory to God,

People **whose power, working in us,
can do infinitely more
than we can ask or imagine.**

**Glory to God from generation to generation,
in the Church and in Christ Jesus,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Dismissal

The celebrant may bless the people. The deacon, or other leader, dismisses the people saying,

Leader Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

*From Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost, **Alleluia** may be added to the dismissal and the people's response.*

At the Ending of a Marriage

The Anglican Church of Canada understands marriage to be a life-long, binding relationship of love, commitment, and support. At the same time the church recognizes that some marriages falter and die. The present practice of the church reflects belief that Christians should support and minister to those whose marriages have failed, both during the time of distress and grief which accompanies divorce, and later if they seek to marry again. This practice is consistent with the ministry of Jesus who “did not break a bruised reed or quench a smouldering wick,” (Mt 12.20) but who met people in their alienation and brokenness and offered healing and wholeness.

The service which follows is not intended to encourage divorce or to promote an indifferent attitude to marriage breakdown. It is intended to provide for a particular model of pastoral care which may be requested by some people whose marriage has died and has, consequently, ended in divorce. This service is not for everyone; it is for those who ask for it. They will be people who are deeply conscious of the solemn purpose with which they entered marriage and of the spiritual dimension of the vows they once took, and who wish to acknowledge the collapse and end of their marriage before God and their fellow-Christians in a similarly solemn form, and to pray for healing, wholeness, and new life.

One of the functions of religious rites, in times of crisis, is to provide for passage from peril to hope. Such rites generally consist of three parts: a moment of separation in which the particular situation is recognized, a moment of transition in which movement from past failure to future hope is described, and a moment of reintegration into the larger community. The rite offered here is intended to conform to this classical pattern, and in specifically Christian terms.

The text which follows may be adapted as pastoral situations require. It may be important to provide opportunity for the acknowledgement of bitterness, anger, or guilt in terms more personal than a generalized text can suggest. At the same time, those who use this text should remember that its ultimate purpose is to provide for the prayerful choice of new life where death might otherwise prevail (see Dt 30.19 and Jn 10.10) and for the deliberate embrace of the future as opportunity for love and service.

When the eucharist is celebrated in conjunction with this service, Eucharistic Prayer 4 in *The Book of Alternative Services* is particularly appropriate.

At the Ending of a Marriage

The Gathering of the Community

The leader greets the community.

Leader The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

People **And also with you.**

Leader Dear friends in Christ,
we have come here today with *N*,
to acknowledge before God
that *his/her* marriage has ended.

Marriage is intended as a lifelong commitment,
in which husband and wife
give themselves to each other,
to care for each other in good times and bad.
They are linked to each other's families,
and they begin a new life together
in the community.

Sometimes, however, despite good efforts,
human frailty destroys marriage,
changing mutual comfort and help
into brokenness and pain.

When a marriage ends in this way,
memories are tarnished,
and hopes and dreams are dashed.
Many people are affected,
family relationships may end,
friends are saddened,
and a time of mourning ensues.
It is to acknowledge this,
and to pray for healing and wholeness,
that we gather here with *N* today.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you enlighten every heart.
Give comfort and healing
to your people gathered here today.
Enable us, with *N*,
to acknowledge what has been lost,
and to turn to you in faith and hope,
trusting in the new life that lies ahead,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Proclamation of the Word

The Readings

One or more passages of scripture may be read, such as Ec 3.1–8, Lam 3.22–26, Rom 8.31–39, Mt 11.28–30. Psalms 23, 121, or 130 may be recited. If there is a celebration of the eucharist there shall be two readings, one of which shall be from the Gospels.

A time of reflection may follow.

Intercessions and Thanksgivings

Intercessions or thanksgivings may be offered for all whose lives have been affected by this ending of a marriage

children

family and friends who are divided

supporting friends

the future.

All or part of the following forms may be used.

Leader Let us pray for all whose lives have been affected
by the ending of this marriage, saying, “Hear our
prayer.”

[Leader God of wisdom and understanding
whose Son Jesus loved children
and blessed them,
bless the children of *N* and *N*.
Strengthen them, calm their fears,
heal their wounds.

Help them to grow in the knowledge of your love.
Comfort them,
that they may know the newness of life
that can come from sadness and brokenness.
Keep them in your loving care, today and always.
Lord, in your mercy,

People

Hear our prayer.]

Leader

God of compassion and healing,
we lift to you our grief
over relationships that have been broken.
We pray for friends and family
who have been divided by this divorce.
We ask you to bestow the blessing of your peace
on all who mourn.
We remember especially
*sons, daughters, parents, grandparents,
aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends.*
(We pray for *N* as *he/she* grieves the loss
of the family from whom *he/she* has been
separated.)

People

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Leader

God of all goodness and mercy,
we thank you for the friendship and love
of those who have helped *N*
through the pain of ending this marriage.
We praise you for the gift of loving friends,
for their support and caring
in the grief and loneliness of separation.
Give us your healing wisdom
and fill our hearts with the comfort and grace
of your strengthening presence.
Lord, in your mercy,

People

Hear our prayer.

This form of confession and absolution may follow.

Leader

Dear friends in Christ,
God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy.
Let us confess our sins,
confident in God's forgiveness.

Silence is kept.

Leader Most merciful God,
All **we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us,
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your name. Amen.**

Leader Almighty God have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in eternal life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People **Amen.**

A deacon or lay person using the preceding form substitutes us for you and our for your.

The divorced person may say in these or similar words,
God of infinite comfort and wisdom,
the marriage I once entered has now ended.
I give thanks for all that was good,
and ask to learn from all that was not.
Help me to let go of all resentment.
By the power of your Holy Spirit,
give me new life in your service,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People **Amen.**

Leader N,
People **We share your sorrow,
we rejoice in your hope,
we pray for your new life.
May God strengthen you,
preserve, shelter, and keep you,
now and always. Amen.**

The Peace

The Peace is exchanged. If the eucharist is to be celebrated the service continues with the preparation of the gifts. If the eucharist is not to be celebrated the service continues as follows.

Leader Gathering our prayers and praises into one,
let us pray as our Saviour taught us.

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

Or

Leader And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us,
we are bold to say,

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

Blessing

The leader dismisses the congregation with this blessing.

God of care and mercy,
be now and evermore our healing and our hope.
In your great compassion, enable *N* to know and to feel
that newness of life is your gift to all your children.
Give to *N* the blessing of your love;
equip *him/her* with everything good
that *he/she* may do your will,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
People **Amen.**

“At the Ending of a Marriage” is based in part on “A Service for the ending of a marriage” in Anne Tanner, Treasures of Darkness, copyright ©1990, Anglican Book Centre, Toronto, Canada. Used with permission.

Marriage Between a Christian and a Person of Another Faith Tradition

Guidelines

These guidelines are addressed primarily to bishops and priests.

Preamble

Canadian society, once considered Christian or at least nominally Christian, has become increasingly composed of persons of many faiths. Understandably, many people who meet one another in the more or less secular circumstances of ordinary life wish to marry across faith boundaries. Such marriages may bring rich cross-cultural experience to the couples and their families and also contribute positively to the texture of a new and emerging society. On the other hand, they sometimes cause strain between the individuals and their own faith communities and this strain unchecked may sometimes affect the quality of the relationships themselves. Increasingly people who wish to marry across faith boundaries approach Anglican clergy for marriage rites. This places a responsibility on such clergy to assess the appropriateness of a marriage in a Christian setting, the design of a suitable liturgy, and the provision of adequate and responsible pastoral support.

Theological Considerations

A Christian understanding of marriage is rooted in a Christian understanding of humanity. It is therefore better to speak of a “Christian understanding of marriage” rather than of “Christian marriage.” A Christian understanding of marriage includes at least the free consent of a man and a woman to a loving relationship which is lifelong and exclusive. It is therefore open to all, whether or not they are Christians, even though Christian tradition and thought have a larger and richer vision of marriage than this minimal standard.

However, although marriage as understood by Christians is open to all, not all necessarily share that understanding. Where an understanding of marriage is in sharp conflict with a Christian understanding of marriage, the marriage of inter-faith partners in a Christian setting may not be appropriate.

In Western Christian theology the ministers of marriage are the couple themselves and this applies to the partners in an inter-faith

marriage as well as to the marriage of two Christians; the church is present at marriage ceremonies to bless and support.

Each partner may bring diverse religious and theological understandings to their marriage. An inter-faith marriage involving a Christian should not question or deny the Christian understanding of marriage as it is reflected in such biblical passages as Mark 10.6–9, Ephesians 5.25–30, and also in the exhortations in the marriage rites of *The Book of Common Prayer* and *The Book of Alternative Services*.

Pastoral Considerations

The following dimensions of pastoral care should be considered by clergy who are asked to preside at an inter-faith marriage.

Exploration of the cultural and religious assumptions of the couple, including

- their understanding of the roles of men and women in their respective societies and the ways in which they expect these roles to be reflected in their relationship;

- the broad outlines of their faith and world view;

- their understanding of the nature of the family and of their responsibility to their children as a couple and as individual care-givers;

- their attitude to divorce and their intention to remain in a lifelong union;

- their understanding of financial considerations and the attitudes of their respective cultures to responsibility for earning and disposing of income;

- sexuality;

- the ways in which problems in a relationship may be faced and conflict may be resolved.

As with all marriages the priest should take note of the other points for discussion named in Canon XXI, Schedule E. In addition the priest should also discuss with the couple

- the attitude of their respective families to their relationship and the ways in which they believe they can deal with anticipated tensions;

- the kind of relationship they expect in their marriage;

their understanding of the nature of free consent in entering into a marriage relationship;¹

their willingness to learn sympathetically about the basic tenets and practice of each other's faith tradition;

whether they have begun a process towards a decision on the religious orientation and education of their children;

the participation of the family in the religious festivals of the partners' faith traditions, and especially the participation of the Christian partner in non-Christian rites;

the implications for their relationship should they move from a Western cultural setting to a non-Western or traditional context.

In the light of these and other conversations the priest and the couple must decide if it is appropriate for this marriage to be celebrated in church, recognizing that a decision to have the ceremony in a civil setting or in the context of the other faith community may be fitting. (A decision that a marriage ceremony in church is not appropriate in this case does not free an Anglican priest to circumvent the House of Bishops guidelines by presiding at a marriage ceremony in a domestic or outdoor setting.)

It should be noted that Canon XXI.I.10 of the Anglican Church of Canada, as well as the rubrics of *The Book of Alternative Services*, requires the bishop's permission for the marriage of two persons one of whom is not baptized, a rule which will apply in almost all cases of inter-faith marriage. Canon XXI.II.14 requires the bishop's permission for the modification of the Form of Solemnization of Matrimony in *The Book of Common Prayer*.

A priest who has presided at an inter-faith marriage has a continuing responsibility to support the husband and wife and their families.

If a couple decides to be married in the tradition of the non-Christian faith, the priest should offer such cooperation and support as the couple requests, and may participate in the rite, if welcomed, as knowledge of the tradition and conscience allow. This would involve some education in that tradition, which would also be important in offering ongoing pastoral care.

¹ Canon XXI.III.17.c defines consent in detail.

Liturgical Considerations

The partner of the other faith tradition may wish to have some changes made in the marriage rites of the Anglican Church of Canada to reflect personal and family sensitivities and to incorporate elements of rites from their own tradition.

The Book of Common Prayer does not in itself allow for such alteration, but Canon XXI.II.14 provides that, "The form may be used with such modifications as may be permitted by the bishop having jurisdiction where the marriage is to be solemnized. In the vow, the non-Christian may omit the words 'holy' and 'according to God's ordinance,' but no other change may be made to the vow or to the declaration of intention."

Within the framework of this limitation there is ample room for the design of a marriage liturgy which draws on the tradition of Christian marriage rites and is also sensitive and hospitable to the partner of the other faith tradition and that person's family.

An inter-faith marriage rite offered by the Anglican Church of Canada is, at base, Christian and Anglican. This means that the centrality of God is at the heart of the liturgy and language referring to God is always to be included. The Trinitarian and Christological context of the worship is implied but the expression of specific references may be omitted out of pastoral sensitivity to the partner of the other faith tradition. However, at least one reading from the Gospels is always to be included, and the Lord's Prayer is to be used.

The eucharist is not celebrated at an inter-faith marriage.

The rite consists of the following elements:

- Greeting and exhortation
- Readings and opportunity for reflection
- Promises and vows (the wedding)
- Prayers of the People
- Blessing of the marriage
- Dismissal.

The marriage rite in *The Book of Alternative Services*, suitably adapted, is attached as the basis of inter-faith wedding services. As noted above, it may only be used in this or any other adapted form with the permission of the diocesan bishop. Suitable songs from the other faith tradition may be used between the readings or at other

points in the liturgy. Suitable ritual gestures drawn from the other tradition may be added, for instance to the ring ceremony. Prayers from other traditions may augment the Prayers of the People (although care should be taken to prevent the prayers from becoming too drawn out), and a religious leader of the other tradition may assist in leading them. It is important that songs, readings, and prayers from the other tradition should complement Christian devotion and serve to foster harmony among those involved. All these suggestions apply equally in principle to adaptation of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage Between a Christian and a Person of Another Faith Tradition

The Gathering of the Community

The people stand. The bride and groom stand before the celebrant.

Celebrant The grace and peace of God
 be with you all.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Dear friends, we have come together in the presence of God to witness the marriage of *N* and *N*, and to rejoice with them.

Marriage is a gift of God and a means of grace, in which man and woman become one flesh. It is God's purpose that, as husband and wife give themselves to each other in love, they shall grow together and be united in that love.

The union of man and woman in heart, body, and mind is intended for their mutual comfort and help, that they may know each other with delight and tenderness in acts of love [and that they may be blessed in the procreation, care, and upbringing of children].

In marriage, husband and wife give themselves to each other, to care for each other in good times and in bad. They are linked to each other's families, and they begin a new life together in the community.

It is a way of life that all should reverence, and none should lightly undertake.

If anyone present knows a reason why *N* and *N* may not lawfully marry, they must declare it now.

N and *N*, if either of you knows a reason why you may not lawfully marry, you must declare it now.

N and N have come to enter this holy state. They have complied with Civil and Canon Law and have been duly prepared to enter into marriage. They will each give their consent to the other; they will exchange solemn vows, and in token of this, they will (each) give and receive a ring.

We pray with them that by grace they may fulfil God's purpose for the whole of their earthly life together.

Let us pray.

Holy God,
you have taught us that those who love
abide in the light of your presence.
Grant to these your servants
that loving one another
they may grow in your grace
and continue in your care
until their lives' end.

People

Amen.

The Proclamation of the Word

One or more readings, including a Gospel reading, shall normally be read. Suitable readings from another faith tradition may be read. Members of the family and friends of the bride and groom may read lessons. Suggested readings may be found on p. 549 in The Book of Alternative Services. The readings shall be selected in consultation with the bride and groom.

After each reading silence may be kept. A psalm, canticle, hymn, or anthem may follow.

The Wedding

The people stand. The celebrant says to the bridegroom,

N will you give yourself to N to be her husband:
to love her, comfort her, honour and protect her;
and forsaking all others, to be faithful to her so
long as you both shall live?

Bridegroom I will.

The celebrant says to the bride,

N will you give yourself to *N* to be his wife:
to love him, comfort him, honour and protect him;
and forsaking all others, to be faithful to him so
long as you both shall live?

Bride I will.

The celebrant may address the following questions to the families of the bride and bridegroom.

Do you, members of the families of *N* and *N*, give your blessing to this marriage?

Answer We do.

The celebrant addresses the following to all present.

You are the witnesses to these vows now being made.
Will you do all in your power to support and uphold
this marriage?

Answer **We will.**

The bride and bridegroom face each other and join hands.

Bridegroom I *N* take you *N* to be my 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
for the rest of our lives,
(according to God's holy law).
This is my solemn vow.

Bride I *N* take you *N* to be my husband,
to have and to hold
from this day forward;
for better, for worse
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health
to love and to cherish
for the rest of our lives,

(according to God's holy law).
This is my solemn vow.

They loose hands. The celebrant receives the ring(s) and addresses the congregation in these or similar words.

Dear friends,
let us ask God to bless *this ring*,
that *it* may be a symbol
of the vow and covenant
N and N have made this day.

The community may pray silently. The celebrant then says,

Blessed are you,
God of steadfast love,
source of our joy and end of our hope.
Bless *this ring* given and received
that *it* may be a symbol
of the vow and covenant
N and N have made this day.
Blessed are you for ever.

People **Amen.**

The bridegroom (and the bride in her turn) places the ring on the ring-finger of the other's hand and says,

N, I give you this ring
as a symbol of my vow.
With all that I am and all that I have
I honour you in the name of God.

The bride and bridegroom join right hands.

Celebrant N and N have joined themselves to each other by solemn vows, signified by the joining of hands and the giving and receiving of a ring. I declare, in the name of God, that they are husband and wife.

Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.

People **Amen.**

The register may be signed at this time or at the end of the service.

The Prayers of the People

The Prayers of the People maybe led by a friend or member of the family or faith community of the bride or groom, or by the celebrant. The following form may be amended or replaced. Appropriate prayers from other traditions may be used.

Leader Let us pray.

Almighty God, in whom we live and move and have our being, look graciously upon the world which you have made, and especially on all whom you make to be one flesh in holy marriage. May their lives together be a sign of your love to this broken world, so that unity may overcome estrangement, forgiveness heal guilt, and joy overcome despair.

Lord, in your mercy.

People **Hear our prayer.**

Leader May N and N so live together that the strength of their love may enrich our common life and become a sign of your faithfulness.

Lord, in your mercy.

People **Hear our prayer.**

[*Leader* May they receive the gift and heritage of children and the grace to bring them up to know and love you.

Lord, in your mercy.

People **Hear our prayer.]**

Leader May their home be a place of truth, security, and love; and their lives an example of concern for others.

Lord, in your mercy.

People **Hear our prayer.**

Leader May those who have witnessed these vows find their lives strengthened and their loyalties confirmed.

Lord, in your mercy.
People **Hear our prayer.**

Other suitable prayers may be used.

The Lord's Prayer

Celebrant Gathering our hopes and praises into one, let us offer our prayer to God.

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

Or

Celebrant And now, as Jesus Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

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

The Blessing of the Marriage

The people remain standing. The husband and wife kneel and the celebrant says the following prayer.

Blessed are you, gracious God, creator of heaven and earth; we give you thanks and praise in the assembly of your people. You made us in your image: male and female you created us. You give us the gift of marriage and consecrate the union of man and woman. You call us to reflect your faithfulness as we serve one another in the bond of covenant love. By the power of your Holy Spirit, pour out the abundance of your blessing upon this man and this woman. Defend them from every enemy. Lead them into all peace. Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts, a mantle about their shoulders, and a crown upon their foreheads. Bless them in their work and in their companionship; in their sleeping and in their waking; in their joys and in their sorrows; in their life and in their death. Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that table of your holy mountain where you prepare the eternal feast for all peoples of the earth. Blessed are you for ever.

People **Amen.**

The husband and wife still kneeling, the celebrant adds this blessing.

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine upon you. The Lord look upon you with favour and give you peace, now and for ever.

People **Amen.**

The Peace

The husband and wife stand.

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

The newly married couple may greet each other.

Liturgies Relating to Death and Burial

Burial of One Who Did Not Profess the Christian Faith

On occasion, members of the Christian community, or representatives of it, may be called upon to provide a funeral liturgy for a person who did not profess faith in Christ. This might be someone of another faith community, or a non-believer.

It should be remembered that the Church stands beside all people in need — with those who hold Christian faith, those who hold to another faith, and those who hold to no faith at all.

Concerning the Occasion

Form 1 or Form 2 of the Funeral Liturgy (pp. 571ff in The Book of Alternative Services) may be creatively adapted to meet such a situation.

The choice of any material, for instance opening sentences, psalms, canticles, readings from both scriptural and other sources, music and prayers, should be undertaken with sensitivity and with the involvement of those who best knew the deceased.

A selection of prayers that may be helpful on such an occasion is provided. These prayers, as well as those found on pp. 601–603 of The Book of Alternative Services, may be adapted for use.

Burial of One Who Did Not Profess the Christian Faith

The celebrant welcomes the congregation. At some appropriate time during the service members of the congregation may express thanksgiving for the gifts of the deceased, keeping in mind the integrity of the person who has died, as well as the needs of the family and other mourners.

Prayers

1

Giver of life,
you know and care for all people,
whoever we are
and whatever our thoughts of you.
Speak your word to us,
and come among us with love
to give life to all,
today and for ever. **Amen.**

2

God of mercy,
do not turn from us
as we look for words to pray to you.
We call to you
because you have promised
that you will be with those in need.
In your compassion,
come near to heal
and make all things new,
now and always. **Amen.**

3

Loving God, we thank you
that you are not indifferent
to our joy and suffering,
that your deepest care
is for our lives and happiness,
that your peace is our peace.

Help us to grow in openness and trust.
May we know your presence
in the support we give one another,
this day and every day. **Amen.**

4

God of grace and glory,
we thank you for *N*, who was so near and dear to us,
and who has now been taken from us.

We thank you for the friendship *he/she* gave
and for the strength and peace *he/she* brought.

We thank you for the love *he/she* offered and received
while *he/she* was with us on earth.

We pray that nothing truly good
in this *man's/woman's* life will be lost,
but will be of benefit to the world;
that all that was important to *him/her*
will be respected by those who follow;
and that everything in which *he/she* was great
will continue to mean much to us now that *he/she* is dead.

We ask you that *he/she* may go on living
in *his/her* children, *his/her* family, and *his/her* friends;
in their hearts and minds,
in their courage and their consciences.

We ask you that we who were close to *him/her* may now,
because of *his/her* death, be even closer to each other,
and that we may, in peace and friendship here on earth,
always be deeply conscious
of your promise to be faithful to us in death.

We pray for ourselves,
who are severely tested by this death,
that we do not try to minimize this loss,
or seek refuge from it in words alone,
and also that we do not brood over it
so that it overwhelms us and isolates us from others.

May God grant us courage and confidence
in the new life of Christ.

We ask this in the name of the risen Lord. **Amen.**

Many of the psalm prayers in The Book of Alternative Services are appropriate with suitable adaptation. The following are examples.

5

Rescue us, O God for whom we wait,
from the depths of depression and despair.
May we trust in your mercy,
know the fullness of your redemption,
and share in the glory of your kingdom. **Amen.**

6

God of compassion and love,
forgive our sins,
relieve our misery,
satisfy our longing,
and fulfil all our hopes for peace. **Amen.**

7

Helper of the helpless,
comfort of the afflicted,
may your servants who stand in the midst of evil
find strength in the knowledge of your presence,
and praise you for the wonders of your love. **Amen.**

8

God of hope,
in times of trouble save us from blind despair
and help us to wait in confidence
for the bloom of new life
which, in the darkness, we cannot imagine.
Hear us, Lord, when we cry to you.
Calm our bodies and minds
with the peace which passes understanding,
and make us radiant with the knowledge of your goodness.
Amen.

9

Gracious God,
in the night of distress
we forget the days of sun and joy.
Even when we do not know your presence,
preserve us from the dark torrent of despair. **Amen.**

10

God of mercy,
deliver those who are weighed down by fear and sorrow,
and give them joy and gladness in your presence. **Amen.**

Psalm 139,1-17 may also be read.

Burial of a Stillborn Child

Concerning the Occasion

The Funeral Liturgy in The Book of Alternative Services may be adapted with pastoral discretion and sensitivity to suit the circumstances and place (home, hospital, church, cemetery).

Burial of a Stillborn Child

The following form of committal may be said.

In sure and certain hope of resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, we commit this body to the ground,* earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

*Or to be consumed by fire, or to its resting place.

One or more of the following prayers may be said.

Almighty God,
Father of mercies and giver of comfort,
deal graciously, we pray, with all who mourn,
that, casting all their care on you,
they may know the consolation of your love,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Most merciful God,
whose wisdom is beyond our understanding,
deal graciously with NN (or N) in *their* grief.
Surround *them* with your love,
that *they* may not be overwhelmed by *their* loss,
but have confidence in your goodness
and strength to meet the days to come;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord, listen to the prayers of those
who put their trust in you.
In their sorrow may they find hope in your infinite mercy.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The following, or a blessing, or another suitable dismissal, may be said.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore. **Amen.**

After a Miscarriage or a Stillbirth

Rationale

The church has a responsibility to offer opportunity for grieving, healing, and affirming the life-giving gifts of God to parents who experience the pain and sorrow of a miscarriage or the birth of a stillborn child.

It is important that our words and actions acknowledge this loss. It is appropriate that the memory of this experience is not dismissed or taken lightly. Comments made to the parents should not burden them with guilt or false reassurances.

If there are other children in the family, they also should be enabled to enter into the mystery of this loss and, with their parents, hear the comforting assurance of God's presence and promise in Jesus Christ.

Concerning the Service

Pastoral care givers, particularly chaplains, should be prepared to offer prayers of comfort and consolation as soon as possible after the miscarriage or stillborn birth. Hospital procedures should include notifying chaplains of miscarriages and stillbirths, so that prayers may be offered in the clinical setting.

In the case of a miscarriage, special prayers and a particular Scripture passage may follow the main service on Sunday or be included in a week-day service. Other family members and close friends may be invited to attend and participate.

A service based on one of the funeral services in The Book of Alternative Services (pp. 576 or 589) may be appropriate in the case of a stillborn child. The liturgy should reflect sensitivity to the fact that the parents have lost their own expectations as well as the child's future. It may be helpful if the stillborn child is named.

A service of the Laying on of Hands and Anointing for the family may be adapted from the liturgy for Ministry to the Sick, The Book of Alternative Services (p. 554).

Suitable Readings

Old Testament Readings

Is 66.7–14	(I will comfort you)
Jer 31.15–17	(Rachel is weeping for her children)
Ps 42	(Where now is your God?)

Ps 91.9–18 (He shall give his angels charge over you)
Ps 103.8–18 (The Lord is full of compassion)
Ps 121 (My help comes from the Lord)
Ps 139.6–18 (Where can I go from your spirit?)
Baruch 4.19–23 (I have put my hope in the Everlasting)

New Testament Readings

Rom 8.31–39 (Nothing will separate us from the love of God)
1 Jn 3.1–2 (We are God's children)

Gospel Readings

Mt 5.1–10 (Blessed are those who mourn)
Mt 18.1–5, 10–14 (Not one of these little ones should be lost)
Mk 10.13–16 (Let the little children come to me)
Jn 10.11–16 (I am the good shepherd)

Prayers

These prayers should be adapted with pastoral discretion and sensitivity to suit the circumstances and place.

Loving God, we come in shock and sadness.
By grace and power you gave us opportunity
to create new life;
now we feel our human frailty.
Hear our cries of disappointment and anger
because of the loss of this new life.
Be with us as we struggle
to understand the mystery of life and death.
Receive this little one into the arms of your mercy,
to abide in your gracious and eternal love.
May we give ourselves over to your tender care.
In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

Holy God, we bring to you our pain and sorrow:
we grieve the loss of a human life.
Show compassion to this mother (N) and father (N),
that they may be comforted by your presence
and strengthened by your Spirit.
Be with this family (NN, *other children*) as they mourn,
and draw them close together in your healing love.
May each of us know that in our pain you bring us comfort,
in our sorrow you bring us hope,
and in our dying you promise us new life.
In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

The mother and/or father may offer a personal prayer or reflection. The following may be found helpful as models.

Creator God, our wombs bring new life to your world.
My body and soul ache with pain for the loss of this child.
Help me to understand where there is no understanding,
strengthen me now in my vulnerability and weakness,
and bring me peace
that I may know more fully your presence
and your salvation,
in the name of Jesus, the child of Mary. **Amen.**

O God, you have loved *me* into being.
Hear *my* cries for *my* loss.
I wanted to bring new life into the world.
Now *I* want to cry forever
and wash your earth with *my* tears.
Move *me* from this darkness
and bring *me* to the light of your love and peace.
In the name of Mary's son. **Amen.**

God of all creation, *I* wanted this child
with all *my* heart, *my* soul, and *my* body.
I feel guilty even though *I* am not to blame,
I feel unworthy, and alone.
Give *me* strength to trust in your faithfulness,
make *me* open to the comfort of family and friends,
and in time free *me* from the bondage of grief.
Bless *me* with the desire and power
to live again in joyful expectation.
I ask this in the name of your Son,
my friend and *my* Saviour. **Amen.**

Installation and Commissioning

Celebration of a New Ministry — A

The installation of a new leader of ministry is a significant moment in the life of a community of faith. The new minister, whether priest, deacon, or lay person, has been chosen to teach and proclaim God's word, to lead in prayer and worship, and to guide in living according to the Gospel — in short, to equip the people to live out their baptismal ministry as God's royal priesthood.

The local community has a particular reference to specific people and concerns. It has its own traditions and customs which ought to be considered when planning the celebration. Usually, the celebration marks a new phase in a ministry of many years, and, therefore, ought to acknowledge the work which has gone on before.

The local community does not stand in isolation, but is linked to the ministry of the whole church. It is therefore desirable that, if possible, the bishop be the officiant. Together, the local community and new minister, with the bishop and the whole church, continue the ministry of the people of God.

Concerning the Service

This service is intended for use at the installation of a person who has been given responsibility for leadership within a community of faith. It should take place as close in time as possible to the beginning date of the new ministry, and should occur at a time when the members of the community directly involved may conveniently attend.

The officiant is the bishop or the bishop's appointee. The bishop, when present, presides at the eucharist; otherwise, the new minister should preside, when that person is a priest.

Provision for involvement of the whole parish should be made when the ministry being celebrated is in a multi-point setting.

Due caution should be exercised in the use of the space available, e.g., in processions.

Psalms, canticles, and hymns may be sung at some of the following points: at the beginning of the service, between the readings, before and after the presentations, during the preparation of the gifts, and at the conclusion of the service.

Symbols of the ministry may be chosen from among those suggested. Other appropriate symbols may be substituted. The symbols used should be of sufficient size to be clearly seen by those present.

If it is decided to use no symbols, the service will proceed to the point where visitors promise to “support N and the parish of N in their ministry together” (p. E7). The new minister will then say, “Dear friends in Christ, let us now pray ...” (p. E10).

All the symbols of ministry do not need to be given to the new minister. For example, if there is a procession to the font, water may be poured into it. Oil may be placed at the font. A bible may be placed on the lectern. The chalice and paten and service book(s) may be placed on the altar for use.

If the eucharist is not to be celebrated, the service may conclude with the Peace and a blessing or dismissal.

Celebration of a New Ministry — A

The Gathering of the Community

All stand. The officiant greets the community.

Officiant The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 and the love of God,
 and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
 be with you all.

People **And also with you.**

Or from Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost,

Officiant Alleluia! Christ is risen.

People **The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Officiant May his grace and peace be with you.

People **May he fill our hearts with joy.**

The officiant may, in the following or similar words, introduce the theme of this celebration as that of the ministry of the whole people of God.

Officiant My brothers and sisters in Christ,
 NN has been chosen to be pastor* of
 this parish of N.
 After prayerful consideration,
 and according to the practice of this diocese,
 I have (*or the bishop has*) appointed N
 to this position of leadership
 in our common ministry.
 This ministry continues the good work
 done through the years in this community,
 and is part of the work and witness
 of the whole church.
 It is a new beginning
 because N brings particular gifts
 to our ministry together.
 As we stand in God's presence
 let us pray that grace will be given to N,
 and to all of us in this ministry,
 that we may fulfil the responsibilities
 which are ours.

**Another title may be substituted, as appropriate.*

Silence is kept.

The prayers, readings, and preface are normally those of the day. If the propers are inappropriate, the following prayers may be used, and a selection may be made from the list of readings on p. E18.

The officiant sings or says either the collect of the day or the following:

Almighty God,
by your grace alone
we are accepted and called to your service.
Strengthen us by your Holy Spirit
and make us worthy of our calling;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

People **Amen.**

The Proclamation of the Word

The Readings

A first reading as appointed.

Reader A reading from ...

At the conclusion of the passage, the reader says,

The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Silence may be kept. Then shall follow a psalm as appointed.

On Sundays and major festivals a second reading as appointed is read.

Reader A reading from ...

At the conclusion of the passage, the reader says,

The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Silence may be kept. A psalm, canticle, hymn, or anthem may follow.

All stand for the Gospel.

Reader The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you**

Reader The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
 according to ...

People **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

At the end of the Gospel, the reader says,

 The Gospel of Christ.

People **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Sermon

A silence for reflection may follow.

Covenant in Ministry

The officiant, standing with the new minister and the churchwardens before the congregation, may then describe the process by which the new minister has been chosen.

The new minister may read any required oaths and declarations.

Or

a churchwarden, or other official, may say,

 I (we) certify
 that the required oaths and declarations
 have been made,
 and the letters of appointment and license
 have been read in my (our) presence.

The officiant asks the new minister,

 Do you,
 in the presence of this congregation,
 commit yourself to the responsibility
 entrusted to you?

The new minister replies,

 I do.

The officiant asks the people of the parish or congregation to stand and says,

 Do you, the people of the parish of N,
 commit yourselves to share with N
 in the ministry of this parish?

People **We do.**

The officiant asks visitors to stand, and says,

As brothers and sisters in the body of Christ,
will you support *N* and the parish of *N*
in their ministry together?

People **We will.**

Representatives of the congregation may present various appropriate symbols of the ministry of the whole people of God.

A representative presents a bible, saying,

N, hold before us
the story of God's love and mercy
and, above all, the Gospel of our Saviour Christ.
Be among us as a preacher of the word of God
and teacher of the faith.

The new minister replies,

I invite you all to join with me
in proclaiming the Gospel of hope and life.

People **Amen. We have good news to share.**

Others may present a vessel of water, saying,

N, in the water of baptism
we are buried with Christ in his death.
By it we share in his resurrection.
Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit.
Be among us as one who baptizes
into the community of Christ.

The new minister replies,

I invite you all to join with me
in rejoicing in our baptismal fellowship,
and in nurturing the community of faith.

People **Amen. May we all grow
into the full stature of Christ.**

Others may present oil, saying,

N, hold before us the anointing of the Holy Spirit
for wholeness of life.
Be among us as reconciler and healer.

The new minister replies,

I invite you all to join with me
in the ministry of reconciliation and healing,

so that through the power of God
we may bring wholeness of life to all people.
People **Amen. In forgiveness and healing
we find new life.**

Others may present a copy of the canons of the diocese, saying,
N, we look to you
to work with the committees
and organizations of the church,
and in our community,
so that our administration
may serve Christ and his Gospel
and not just ourselves.
Be among us in wisdom and humility,
in discernment and good humour.

The new minister replies,
I invite you all to join with me
in working for the building up of Christ's Church.
People **Amen. We are the Body of Christ.**

A churchwarden may present the keys of the church, saying,
N, we look to you to lead and encourage us
to be an open, welcoming community.
Accept these keys,
and let the doors of this place
be open to everyone.

The new minister replies,
I invite you all to join with me
in welcoming all who would come
into the fellowship of the people of God.
People **Amen. May we greet Christ in all who come.**

A representative may present (a) prayer book(s), saying
N, we look to you to lead us in worship,
so that, in word and sacrament,
we may be renewed in our life together
in our Lord Jesus Christ.
Receive these books (this book)
and be among us as a person of prayer.

The new minister replies,

I invite you all to join with me,
and with the whole Church,
in regular and constant prayer to our God.

People **Amen. In quietness and confidence
will be our strength.**

Representatives of the congregation may present bread and wine, saying,

N, we look to you
as one who presides at the eucharist
and shares with us
and with the whole church
in the breaking of the bread
as a foretaste of the heavenly banquet.
Be among us to break the bread and bless the cup.

The new minister replies,

I invite you all to join with me
in making eucharist together,
in company with the church in every age.

*[If the new minister is not a priest, the representatives of the
congregation may say,*

We look to you
as one who shares with us
and with the whole church
in the breaking of the bread,
as a foretaste of the heavenly banquet.
Be among us in making eucharist.]

People **Amen. May we know the Lord Jesus
in the breaking of the bread.**

Officiant *N*, let all these be signs of the ministry
which is mine (the bishop's) and yours,
and is shared by all the people of God.

The new minister replies,

Amen. May we find joy together
in the service of Christ.

Officiant I present *N* as the leader of your ministry,
and I invite your welcome.

The congregation may respond.

The new minister says,

Dear friends in Christ,
let us pray that this ministry we share
may accomplish the purpose of God's grace.
Let us pray for the world,
the universal Church,
and for ourselves.

Members of the community may lead the congregation in prayer for the Church, for the world, and for all people. A leader may conclude the prayers with the following (or other suitable) collect.

Almighty God,
you have given us grace at this time
with one accord to make our common supplications to you,
and you have promised through your well-beloved Son
that when two or three are gathered together
you will hear their requests.
Fulfil now our desires and petitions,
as may be best for us,
granting us in this world knowledge of your truth,
and in the age to come eternal life;
for you are good and loving,
and we glorify you through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
in the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

The new minister says,

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

The members of the community, ministers and people, may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

The service may continue with the preparation of the gifts for the eucharist.

* * *

The readings are those of the day or other appropriate texts. A list of readings may be found on p. E18.

Celebration of a New Ministry — B

The installation of a new leader of ministry is a significant moment in the life of a community of faith. The new minister, whether priest, deacon, or lay person, has been chosen to teach and proclaim God's word, to lead in prayer and worship, and to guide in living according to the Gospel — in short, to equip the people to live out their baptismal ministry as God's royal priesthood.

The local community has a particular reference to specific people and concerns. It has its own traditions and customs which ought to be considered when planning the celebration. Usually the celebration marks a new phase in a ministry of many years, and therefore ought to acknowledge the work which has gone on before.

The local community does not stand in isolation, but is linked to the ministry of the whole church. It is therefore desirable that, if possible, the bishop be the officiant. Together, the local community and new minister, with the bishop and the whole church, continue the ministry of the people of God.

Concerning the Service

This service is intended for use at the installation of a person who has been given responsibility for leadership within a community of faith.

It should take place as close in time as possible to the beginning date of the new ministry, and should occur at a time when the members of the community directly involved may conveniently attend.

The officiant is the bishop or the bishop's appointee. The bishop, when present, presides at the eucharist; otherwise, the new minister should preside, when that person is a priest.

Provision for involvement of the whole parish should be made when the ministry being celebrated is in a multi-point setting.

Due caution should be exercised in the use of the space available, e.g. in processions.

Psalms, canticles, and hymns may be sung at some of the following points: at the beginning of the service, between the readings, during the preparation of the gifts, and at the conclusion of the service.

If the eucharist is not to be celebrated, the service may conclude with the Peace and a blessing or dismissal.

Celebration of a New Ministry — B

The Gathering of the Community

All stand. The officiant greets the community.

Officiant The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 and the love of God,
 and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
 be with you all.

People **And also with you.**

Or from Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost,

Officiant Alleluia! Christ is risen.

People **The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Officiant May his grace and peace be with you.

People **May he fill our hearts with joy.**

The officiant may, in the following or similar words, introduce the theme of this celebration as that of the ministry of the whole people of God.

Officiant My brothers and sisters in Christ,
 NN has been chosen to be pastor*
 of this parish of N.
 After prayerful consideration,
 and according to the practice of this diocese,
 I have (*or the bishop has*) appointed N
 to this position of leadership
 in our common ministry.
 This ministry continues the good work
 done through the years in this community,
 and is part of the work and witness
 of the whole church.
 It is a new beginning
 because N brings particular gifts
 to our ministry together.
 As we stand in God's presence
 let us pray that grace will be given to N,
 and to all of us in this ministry,
 that we may fulfil the responsibilities
 which are ours.

**Another title may be substituted, as appropriate.*

Silence is kept.

The prayers, readings, and preface are normally those of the day. If the propers are inappropriate, the following prayers may be used, and a selection may be made from the list of readings on p. E18.

The officiant sings or says either the collect of the day or the following:

Almighty God,
by your grace alone
we are accepted and called to your service.
Strengthen us by your Holy Spirit
and make us worthy of our calling;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

People **Amen.**

The Proclamation of the Word

The Readings

A first reading as appointed.

Reader A reading from ...

At the conclusion of the passage, the reader says,

The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Silence may be kept. Then shall follow a psalm as appointed.

On Sundays and major festivals a second reading as appointed is read.

Reader A reading from ...

At the conclusion of the passage, the reader says,

The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Silence may be kept. A psalm, canticle, hymn, or anthem may follow.

All stand for the Gospel.

Reader The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Reader The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
 according to ...

People **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

At the end of the Gospel, the reader says,

 The Gospel of Christ.

People **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Sermon

A silence for reflection may follow.

Covenant in Ministry

The officiant, standing with the new minister and the churchwardens before the congregation, may then describe the process by which the new minister has been chosen.

The new minister may read any required oaths and declarations.

Or

a churchwarden, or other official, may say,

 I (we) certify
 that the required oaths and declarations
 have been made,
 and the letters of appointment and licence
 have been read in my (our) presence.

Officiant Do you,
 in the presence of this congregation,
 commit yourself to the responsibility
 entrusted to you?

The new minister replies,

 I do.

The officiant asks the people of the parish to stand and says,

 Do you, the people of the parish of N,
 commit yourselves to share with N
 in the ministry of this parish?

People **We do.**

The officiant asks visitors to stand, and says,

As brothers and sisters in the body of Christ,
will you support *N* and the parish of *N*
in their ministry together?

People **We will.**

Officiant Let us affirm the ministry of our baptism.

All **We are the household of God.**
We confess the faith of Christ crucified,
we proclaim his resurrection,
we share in his eternal priesthood.

A hymn may be sung.

The Prayers of the People

The Prayers of the People may be led by a number of members of the congregation. The following prayers may be adapted as required. The fourth suffrage may be offered by the new minister. The litany of the Holy Spirit, p. 123 in The Book of Alternative Services, may be used instead of this form of prayer.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,
we are called to proclaim
the story of God's love and mercy
and, above all, the Gospel of our Saviour Christ:
I ask your prayers for *N* who has come among us
to preach the word of God and to teach the faith.

Silence

Leader Lord in your mercy,
People **Hear our prayer.**

We are called to be a sign and witness
of God's purpose for all the human family:
I ask your prayers for *N* who has come among us
to share our joys and sorrows,
to counsel, reconcile, and comfort;
to nurture this community of faith.

Silence

Leader Lord in your mercy,
People **Hear our prayer.**

I ask your prayers for the committees and organizations
of our church and community,
and for *N*, that in wisdom and humility,
in discernment and good humour
he/she may join with us
in working for the building up of Christ's Church.

Silence

Leader Lord in your mercy,
People **Hear our prayer.**

I ask your prayers for us all,
that together we may learn the ways of the kingdom,
patterned in worship and practised in love.
Together may we welcome strangers,
stand with outcasts,
and support those who are broken,
in the pattern of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Silence

Leader Lord in your mercy,
People **Hear our prayer.**

*Other petitions for the world, the Church, the local community, the sick,
friends and family of those present, and the departed, may be offered.*

Silence

Leader Lord in your mercy,
People **Hear our prayer.**

The officiant may conclude in these or similar words.

Almighty God,
you have given us grace at this time
with one accord to make our common supplications to you,
and you have promised through your well-beloved Son
that when two or three are gathered together
you will hear their requests.
Fulfil now our desires and petitions,
as may be best for us,
granting us in this world knowledge of your truth,
and in the age to come eternal life;
for you are good and loving,

and we glorify you
through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
in the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Peace

The new minister says,

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

*The members of the community, ministers and people, may greet one another
in the name of the Lord.*

The service may continue with the preparation of the gifts for the eucharist.

* * *

Readings and Psalms Suitable for the Celebration of a New Ministry

The readings are those of the day, or may be chosen from the following list. This list is intended to be helpful, but not restrictive.

Old Testament Readings

Numbers 11.16–17,24–25a (Gather for me seventy of the elders of Israel)
Jeremiah 1.4–9 (Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you)

Psalms and Suitable Refrains

84 (Happy are the people whose strength is in you)
119.33–40 (Give me life in your ways)
146 (God keeps his promise for ever or Allelujah)

New Testament Readings

Romans 12.1–18 (We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us)
2 Corinthians 4.1–6 (We do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord)
Ephesians 4.7,11–16 (To equip the saints for the work of ministry)

Gospel Readings

Luke 10.1–2 (The Lord appointed seventy others)
John 14.11–15 (If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it)
John 15.9–16 (Love one another)

Form of Institution

Concerning the Occasion

This form is intended for the institution of the incumbent of a parish at a time and place other than the public celebration of the new ministry.

The rite may take place in the bishop's office, the cathedral, the diocesan chapel, or the vestry of the parish church prior to the public celebration.

If this form is used during a celebration of the eucharist, it takes place before the prayers of the people.

This text may require revision to meet local canonical and statutory provisions.

Form of Institution

All stand.

If there are others present, the bishop may begin with a brief statement of the purpose of the gathering.

Bishop Let us pray.

The community may pray silently. The bishop says the following prayer.

Almighty and everlasting God,
by your Spirit
the whole body of your faithful people
is governed and sanctified.
Receive our supplications and prayers,
which we offer before you
for all members of your holy Church,
that in our vocation and ministry
we may truly and devoutly serve you;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

People **Amen.**

The required oaths and declarations may be read.

Or

the letter of appointment and licence may be read.

Bishop *N*, do you commit yourself
to this trust and responsibility?

Answer I do.

Bishop Do you promise to obey your bishop,
in accordance with the canons of this church?

Answer I do.

The bishop may say,

Most gracious God,
we praise you for the gifts which you bestow
on all who minister
in your Church.
Hear us as we pray for *N*,
for the parish of *N*,
and for this diocese,
that we may be strengthened

in our ministry together.
We ask this for the sake of him
who is the shepherd of your flock,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

People **Amen.**

The bishop may bless the people.

Installation of a Dean

Concerning the Occasion

The installation of a dean is a diocesan event but is inseparable from the cathedral's ministry as (parish and) mother church.

The position of the dean in the structures of the church varies considerably, and this rite may be adapted to reflect the particular circumstances.

Installation of a Dean

Following the greeting (p. 185 or p. 230 in The Book of Alternative Services), the bishop says in these or similar words.

Bishop My brothers and sisters in Christ,
N has been chosen to be
dean of ...
pastor of this cathedral church of ...
(or ...)
You, of the cathedral congregation
share with N in many varieties of ministry,
among those who come regularly to this place,
and those who are present on special occasions.

Here the bishop may describe briefly the roles of the dean and of the cathedral.

After prayerful consideration,
and according to the practice of this diocese,
I have appointed N
to this position of leadership
in our common ministry.
This ministry will continue the good work
done through the years
in this cathedral and diocese,
and is part of the work and witness
of the whole church.
It is a new ministry
because N brings particular gifts
to our life and work together.
As we stand in God's presence
let us pray that grace will be given to N,
and to all of us in this ministry,
that we may fulfil the responsibilities
which are ours.

The service continues with the collect of the day.

After the Proclamation of the Word, sections of the liturgy for the Celebration of a New Ministry (pp. E2ff or pp. E11ff) may be used as appropriate. The installation follows.

The bishop and chancellor (or other diocesan officer or officers), accompanied by the churchwardens, lead the dean to his/her stall.

Bishop As bishop of ...
 I install you as Dean of ...
 with the rights and responsibilities
 belonging to that office.
 May the power and presence of God be with you
 in all that you do.

Dean I promise, with God's help,
 faithfully to discharge the duties
 which are committed to me.

The service continues with the Prayers of the People.

Installation of a Diocesan Officer

Concerning the Occasion

The installation is appropriate when representatives of the diocesan community are present, such as a synod or a meeting of the diocesan council.

Installation of a Diocesan Officer

At the eucharist, or at Morning or Evening Prayer, before the Prayers of the People or the Intercessions and Thanksgivings, the bishop or the bishop's appointee shall say,

Brothers and sisters in Christ
today I call NN
to be ...

The person designated shall come forward.

Bishop NN, it will be your task
to share in the administration of the church,
to care for the people and their pastors,
to ...
to pray for the mission of Christ's Church.
Will you commit yourself to this ministry,
as it is determined by the practices of this
diocese?

The person designated says,

I will.

Bishop I appoint you ...
and entrust you with this ministry.

Let us pray.
Blessed are you, Shepherd of Israel,
you lead your people like a flock.
Now strengthen your servant N
to care for your church
in faithful integrity
and gentle humility,
for the sake of your Son
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

If appropriate, the bishop or dean may lead the new officer to his/her stall.

A member of the community leads the Prayers of the People, or the Intercessions and Thanksgivings.

Blessing or Commissioning for Service in Mission

Concerning the Occasion

This form of service is intended for the commissioning of those who are undertaking an extended period of service, for instance as teachers or health care workers in a developing country, in the north, or in an urban project. Commissioning for Lay Ministries, pp. E31ff, should be used for the commissioning of various kinds of leaders in the local congregation.

On a Sunday or holy day at the principal celebration of a congregation the readings of the day should be used. At other times choice may be made from among the following readings, Is 49.1–6, Is 52.7–10, Acts 13.46–49, Acts 26. 19–23, Ps 16.5–11, 2 Cor 5.14–20, Eph 2.13–end, Mk 16.15–20, Lk 5.1–11.

Blessing or Commissioning for Service in Mission

At the time of the Prayers of the People or Intercessions the presiding minister says in these or similar words.

Dear friends,
in the mission of Jesus Christ
we are constantly brought together and sent out.
We are gathered by God's word and table,
and we are sent out to do God's work
of healing, justice, and peace.
Today that rhythm unfolds in our midst:
N (or N, and NN) has (*have*) been called to work in . . .

The presiding minister may add further information about the person or persons to be commissioned, and about the context in which they will serve.

The presiding minister continues,
We are one body with one mission,
united in both call and prayer.
Let us now offer prayer
for N (N, and NN)
and those whose tasks they will share.

Silence is kept.

A litany, or other form of intercession shall be offered. Either Litany No. 6 or Litany No. 7 on pp. 115f in The Book of Alternative Services is suitable for adaptation at this point. The following or similar suffrages may be inserted in Litany No. 6. Some existing suffrages may be omitted.

For N (or N, and NN), that *his/her/their* presence in ... may strengthen the bonds of communion between our churches, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord have mercy.

For N (or N, and NN), that in ministering in ... *he/she/they* may acknowledge and respect the gifts of others, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord have mercy.

The following or similar suffrages may be inserted in Litany No. 7. Some existing suffrages may be omitted.

For *N* (or *N*, and *NN*), and the people of ... in their common task, let us ask the unity Christ gives.

Lord, hear and have mercy.

For *N* (or *N*, and *NN*), that in ministering in ... *he/she/they* may acknowledge and respect the gifts of others, let us ask the loving-kindness of the Lord.

Lord, hear and have mercy.

Other Intercessions or Prayers of the People may be offered.

The presiding minister concludes the Intercessions or Prayers of the People in these or similar words.

We thank you, gracious God,
for enriching us with the gifts of your Spirit.
Grant that as we send forth *N* (or *N*, and *NN*) in your name,
so *he/she/they* may return to us
with a new sense of your presence
in the lives of others;
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The presiding minister then invites the person or persons to be commissioned to come forward, and continues in these or similar words with hands outstretched.

We bless you, O God, and we praise your name,
you anointed your own Son with the Holy Spirit
to preach good news to the poor,
to heal the broken-hearted,
and to comfort the sorrowful.
Look kindly on your servant(s)
whom we send forth as *a messenger(s)* of salvation and peace.
Guide *his/her/their* steps, and with the power of your grace
strengthen *him/her/them* in spirit.
Make *his/her/their* words the echo of Christ's voice,
so those who hear *him/her/them*
may be drawn to his Gospel.
Through *him/her/them* may your Holy Spirit
touch the hearts of all *he/she/they* meet(s).
We ask this through Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the same Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The presiding minister greets the people with the Peace. Members of the congregation greet one another. If this form of commissioning is used at a liturgy of the word it is followed by the Lord's Prayer and the dismissal; if it is used at a celebration of the eucharist it is followed by the preparation of the gifts. Eucharistic Prayers No. 4 and No. 5 are particularly appropriate.

Commissioning for Lay Ministries in the Church

Concerning the Occasion

All Christians are commissioned for ministry at their baptism and no further form of commissioning is necessary for lay ministry. Individuals who undertake a particular ministry share in the task of equipping “the saints for the work of ministry, for building up Body of Christ” (Eph 4.12). The form which follows is intended for use when public recognition of a particular lay ministry is desired. It may be used at the beginning of a professional ministry, for example, of a youth worker or a parish musician, or to recognize volunteer ministers such as wardens, members of the parish council or vestry, Sunday School teachers, choristers, members of the altar guild, pastoral visitors, and acolytes or servers. It may also be used when a member of the parish assumes a ministry in the community on behalf of the parish.

A number of people may be commissioned to related ministries at the same time, but the distinctive features of different ministries should be clear in the celebration of the rite.

Following the sermon (and creed) at the eucharist, or before the Intercessions and Thanksgivings at morning or evening prayer, those to be commissioned stand before the presiding minister.

Commissioning for Lay Ministries in the Church

The presiding minister says in these or similar words.

Brothers and sisters in Christ,
we are all baptized by the one Spirit into one body,
and given gifts for a variety of ministries
for the common good.

Our purpose today is to recognize and affirm
the *ministry* for which *this person* has offered *himself/herself*.

The presiding minister describes the ministry and then continues

Is it your will that *N* (or *NN*)
fulfil this ministry?

People **It is.**

The presiding minister addresses those to be commissioned.

N (or *NN*),
you have been called to this ministry.
Will you, as long as you are engaged in this work,
perform it with care,
to the honour of God and the benefit of the Church?

Answer **I will.**

The presiding minister addresses the congregation.

Minister Will you uphold *him/her* in this service?

People **We will.**

The presiding minister continues,

Let us pray.
Blessed are you, gracious God,
our creator and redeemer.
In every age you call people
to minister in your name.
May the work of *this* your *servant*
so build up your Church,
that we may faithfully serve you
and show your love in all the world.
Blessed are you, O God,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

Symbols appropriate to the ministry may be presented.

The presiding minister may say,

N (or NN), the Lord enable and uphold you
in this ministry.

The service continues with the Prayers of the People, or the Intercessions and Thanksgivings, during which prayer may be offered for the ministry of the congregation, and for those newly commissioned. Litany 3 or Litany 6 in The Book of Alternative Services (pp. 112, 116) is appropriate.

In Litany 3 the following may be inserted after the first petition.

We pray for this parish and for all who minister here
(especially N or NN), that we may find joy in your service.

Lord, hear our prayer.

In Litany 6 the following may be inserted after the first petition.

For the ministry of this parish, (and especially for N or NN),
that we may bear faithful witness to the gospel of Christ, let
us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

The prayers may conclude with this collect.

Almighty God,

by your grace alone

we are accepted and called to your service.

Strengthen us by your Holy Spirit

and make us worthy of our calling;

through Jesus Christ our Lord,

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

At the exchange of the Peace, the presiding minister and others may greet the newly commissioned minister(s).

The Welcoming and Seating of the Bishop in the Cathedral

Concerning the Service

The service which follows is intended for use when a bishop who has been ordained at another time or place is welcomed to the cathedral church for the first time as diocesan bishop.

This service may be adapted to include local customs or to conform to the requirements of local canons and should reflect the distinct character of the particular community.

Although the following rite presupposes that the dean of the cathedral first welcomes the bishop on behalf of the diocese, in some cases this responsibility may fall to another diocesan officer for local reasons.

The Welcoming and Seating of a Bishop in the Cathedral

The ministers and people assemble in the cathedral church.

The bishop, accompanied by representatives of the diocese, clergy and laity, waits outside the principal door. The dean and other diocesan representatives await him/her within.

The bishop knocks three times on the door. As the wardens open the door, the people stand. The dean welcomes the bishop in these or similar words.

N, bishop in the Church of God and our bishop, we welcome you to your cathedral church, the symbol and centre of your pastoral, liturgical, and teaching ministry in this diocese.

The bishop responds, saying,

I thank you for your welcome. I promise, with God's help, to be a faithful pastor and servant among you. I pray that the ministry we share may be pleasing to God and may strengthen the life of this diocese and the whole Church of God.

The bishop enters and greets the congregation, saying,

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

People **And also with you.**

Or from Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost,

Bishop Alleluia! Christ is risen.

People **The Lord is risen indeed, Alleluia!**

Bishop May his grace and peace be with you.

People **May he fill our hearts with joy.**

The bishop may then continue,

Bishop There is one body and one Spirit,

People **There is one hope in God's call to us;**

Bishop One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

People **One God and Father of all.**

A psalm, anthem, or hymn is sung as the bishop is escorted to a place in full sight of the people.

The chancellor of the diocese reads the certificates of election and ordination.

The bishop is escorted to the chair. The people say,

N, we, the people of this diocese, receive you as our bishop. Be seated among us as our pastor and leader. May the Lord stir up in you the flame of holy charity, and the power of faith that renews the world. Amen.

The bishop is seated and the people may offer their acclamations and applause.

A hymn may be sung.

The prayers and readings, are normally those of the day. If the propers are inappropriate, the following prayer may be used and a selection may be made from the readings provided for Ember Days or the Common of a Pastor, and the Prayer over the Gifts and the Prayer after Communion provided for Ember Days may be used (see The Book of Alternative Services, pp. 395–396, 441–442).

The bishop says, Let us pray. The community may pray silently.

The bishop sings or says the following collect.

Almighty God,
by your grace alone
we are accepted and called to your service.
Strengthen us by your Holy Spirit
and make us worthy of our calling;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

The Proclamation of the Word

After each reading silence may be kept. A psalm, canticle, hymn, or anthem may follow.

Following the sermon, either the Nicene Creed or the Apostles' Creed may be used.

The appointed person leads the Prayers of the People. The following form may be used.

Sisters and brothers in Christ, we are called to proclaim the story of God's love and mercy and, above all, the Gospel of our Saviour Christ: I ask your prayers for *N* who has come among us to preach the word of God and to teach the faith.

Silence

Leader Lord, in your mercy,
People **Hear our prayer.**

Silence

We are called to be a sign and witness of God's purpose for all the human family: I ask your prayers for *N* who has come among us to share our joys and sorrows, to counsel, reconcile, and comfort, to nurture our diocesan family.

Leader Lord, in your mercy,
People **Hear our prayer.**

Silence

I ask your prayers for the congregations and communities of this diocese, and for *N*, that *she/he* will encourage and support all the baptized in their gifts and ministries.

Leader Lord, in your mercy,
People **Hear our prayer.**

Silence

I ask your prayers for the committees and organizations of the diocese, and for *N*, that in wisdom and humility, in discernment and good humour, we may build up the Church of Christ.

Leader Lord, in your mercy,
People **Hear our prayer.**

Silence

I ask your prayers for us all, that together we may learn the ways of the kingdom, patterned in worship and practised in love. Following the

example of our Saviour Jesus Christ may we welcome strangers, stand with outcasts, and support those who are broken.

Leader Lord, in your mercy,
People **Hear our prayer.**

Silence

Other petitions for the world, the church, the local community, the sick, friends and family of those present, and the departed, may be offered.

Silence

Leader Lord, in your mercy,
People **Hear our prayer.**

The bishop may conclude in these or similar words.

Giver of all gifts,
you have made us one body.
Bring us to unity of faith and maturity of life
that we may build one another up in Christ
who, with you and the Holy Spirit, is one God,
now and for ever. Amen.

All stand, and the bishop addresses the people.

Bishop The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People **And also with you.**

The members of the community may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

The Celebration of the Eucharist

It is appropriate that a hymn be sung during the offertory.

Representatives of the people may present the gifts of bread and wine for the eucharist (with money and other gifts for the needs and responsibilities of the church).

If Eucharistic Prayer 3 is used, the Preface of the Day, or the third Preface of the Lord's Day, or the Preface of Ordination is appropriate.

When the Prayer after Communion has been said, the bishop may bless the people in these or similar words.

Bishop **Our help is in the name of the Lord**

People **The maker of heaven and earth.**

Bishop Blessed be the name of the Lord.

People **From this time forth for evermore.**

Bishop The blessing, mercy, and grace of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you for ever.

People **Amen.**

A deacon dismisses the people with these or similar words.

Deacon Go forth into the world,
rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

People **Thanks be to God.**

From Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost, Alleluia is added to the dismissal and the people's response.

Blessings and Prayers for the Created Order

Blessing

Blessing is a common feature of Christian worship. The presiding minister often blesses the congregation at the conclusion of a liturgy. Blessing is an integral part of the marriage rite. Baptismal water and marriage rings are blessed before their liturgical use. Traditionally, church buildings are blessed in a very solemn rite known as *consecration*. In popular practice, the Advent wreath and the Christmas crèche are blessed at the beginning of their respective seasons. And so on.

In recent years some Christians have begun to ask questions about blessings. What is intended by a blessing? What happens? Is there a difference between blessing people and blessing places and things? What is the most appropriate form of a blessing? Who may bless? Certainly there is room here for consideration and review.

Some stories in the bible seem to suggest that the power to bless is a force held by certain people because of their place in the order of human relationships. In the story of Isaac and his sons, for instance, Isaac holds a blessing which he intends to give to Esau, his eldest son, before he dies. However, Isaac's younger son, Jacob, masquerades as the elder brother and tricks his blind father into giving the blessing to the wrong son. The blessing passes almost like an impersonal force, and the deed once done cannot be reversed. Esau weeps and begs his father to bless him too, but Isaac is powerless and the gift remains with Jacob.¹

Another strand of biblical thought suggests that blessing belongs primarily to God and is given only at God's initiative. In one story, Balak, king of Moab, watches with horror as the people of Israel march triumphantly towards his land. He hires Balaam, a soothsayer, to curse the Israelites. But God tells Balaam that he has already blessed the Israelites, and warns him not to curse them. When Balaam is pressed by the king of Moab, God allows him to proceed with the ritual but commands him to repeat only what he is allowed to say. Three times Balaam tries to keep his contract with the king of Moab, but three times the words that come from his mouth are words of blessing. (It is a lovely irony that the words of Balaam's unwilling blessing, "How fair are your tents, O Jacob, your encampments, O Israel," are now part of the introduction to the daily synagogue liturgy.) (See Num 22–24.)

Some stories tend to imply that blessing opens the gateway to wealth and success for the person who receives the blessing. In

other stories, like the story of Abraham, blessing has implications for the long-range future. God's blessing of Abraham is a covenant which will extend to future generations. As the story of Abraham's descendants unfolds, it becomes apparent that blessing may be withheld because of disobedience. The absence of blessing may take the form of judgement.

The first appearance of a blessing in a congregational liturgy is recorded in Numbers 6. Part of this particular form of blessing is still used by Jews and Christians.

The Lord commanded Moses to tell Aaron and his sons to use the following words in blessing the people of Israel: May the Lord bless you and take care of you; May the Lord be kind and gracious to you; May the Lord look on you with favour and give you peace. And the Lord said, "If they pronounce my name as a blessing upon the people of Israel, I will bless them."

In Hebrew thought a name connotes identity. Blessing the people with God's name identifies them as the people of God. They are, as it were, inscribed with God's signature.

The first creation story (Gen 1.1—2.3) contains a whole theology of blessing. Some non-biblical creation stories seem to suggest that nature is sacred in itself or may be infused with sacred qualities through the practice of ritual and festival. The creation story at the beginning of Genesis stands stoutly against that tradition. The world is not divine but is here because God made it, and it has vitality because God blessed it.

The creation story unfolds in the sequence of the days of the first week, but twice the flow of events is interrupted for a blessing (Gen 1.22 and 28), and a third blessing is added at the end (Gen 2.3). There appear to be two moments or dimensions in the Genesis view of creation: first God creates, then God blesses. It will not be necessary for people to have recourse to the gods of fertility because God's blessing confers the vitality and power which the world will need for its fullness.

Blessing in the Hebrew scriptures is about life, full and overflowing. God blesses the creatures of water and air. God blesses the man and the woman with fertility and with responsibility for the world. Finally, at the end of the process of creation, God blesses the day of rest. Blessing is not just a gesture of good will. Blessing is a state of well-being given for the

fulfilment of creation. It is wholeness. It is everything we have come to understand by the Hebrew word *shalom*.

We may untangle a sequence of thought in which blessing is presented in the scriptures of the Old Testament:

- 1 God blesses all life for its extension and well-being; humans participate in this blessing through procreation and by accepting responsibility for the created order;
- 2 people bless people (fathers bless their sons, priests bless the congregation, brothers bless their sisters when they marry) as a sign of their common participation in God's blessing;
- 3 people bless God as a response to God's blessing and as prayer for their participation in God's blessing (see Psalms 103 and 134 as examples).

While the Hebrew scriptures abound with examples of people blessing each other and blessing God for his goodness, at first glance there does not appear to be much evidence of their blessing places and things as Christians have developed that practice. Perhaps a close example is Solomon's dedication of the Temple, a rite that was clearly intended to inaugurate the use of the new liturgical space he had built. However, his prayer of dedication (1 Kings 8.22–61) is less concerned with the state of the Temple as a blessed place than with the use of the Temple in the piety of Israel. When his prayer is ended, Solomon blesses the people by blessing God (vv. 55f).

As Judaism developed, an elaborate scheme of blessings was created, to be recited on most important occasions of life, including everyday occasions like eating, drinking, being in a storm, on seeing a rainbow, etc. (A prayer of this kind is called a *berakah*, because of its opening word in Hebrew.) Rabbis taught that "It is forbidden to a man to enjoy anything of this world without a benediction, and if anyone enjoys anything of this world without a benediction, he commits sacrilege." Another rabbi said, "To enjoy anything of this world without a benediction is like making personal use of thing consecrated to heaven, since it says 'The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.'"

Jewish blessings often begin with the formula, "Blessed are you, Lord God, King of the universe." They continue with a statement of the reason why the blessing is offered. A simple blessing before eating bread continues, "who bring forth bread from the earth." Longer blessings include petitions. Such blessings are prayers

related to the ongoing process of life and the fulfilment of God's creation.

Prayer of this kind passed into Christian practice. In the *Benedictus*, for instance, Zechariah blesses his son John by blessing God for the covenant of salvation (Lk 1.68–79). Paul refers to the eucharistic cup as “the cup of blessing that we bless” (1 Cor 10.16). However, at a very early date in their history, Christians began to translate the Hebrew word for “blessing” into the Greek word for “thanksgiving,” especially when it referred to the eucharist. The practice of blessing the food of the eucharist by giving thanks continued, but (in the West in particular) other blessings eventually appeared to be prayers in which we ask God to do something quite different. A split was created between blessing and thanksgiving.

If we analyze our traditional Western forms of blessing we find that they tend to suggest that something has to be done to things like wedding rings and candlesticks and vestments and church buildings to make them fit for the holy purposes in which they are to be used. There is an implication that the object in question is not holy but has to be made holy. At this point a return to the Jewish roots of blessing may be helpful. Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman has written,

contrary to popular opinion, “blessing food” does not add to its sanctity, but the very reverse. Like cultic property, food in its natural state is holy, reserved to God, who is holy . . . We release it for profane use only by acknowledging God's holiness in a blessing.²

Perhaps it is time to recover this sense that everything which comes from the Creator's hand is holy and is released for our use by grateful praise and thanksgiving. In doing so we may discover again a vision of the universe as sacramental (and consequently of the environment as a sacred trust). We must remind ourselves that although not every blessing is the eucharist, every blessing is eucharistic (i.e., an act of thanksgiving) and finds its fulfilment and completion in that central Christian act of worship.

The same point applies to the blessing of people. We bless people not to increase their spiritual dignity but to give thanks for the role they have been called to play within the reign of God and thus to release them to play their part. Every eucharistic prayer is such a blessing: we give thanks for the mighty acts of God and pray that those who gather at the table may be “one body and one holy

people, a living sacrifice in Jesus Christ, our Lord." Of course our traditional forms of blessing people may continue (e.g., "Almighty God ... bless you"), but we should remember that they are prayers of thanksgiving for God's goodness and grace already received, and for its completion in these people.

For centuries the Church has blessed people, places, and things apart from celebrations of the eucharist, and this is appropriate as long as the eucharistic context of the Church's whole life is remembered. Strictly speaking, Christians cannot separate blessing and thanksgiving. Every prayer of blessing is thanksgiving for creation and redemption, offered in petition for the fulfilment of the divine purpose in God's people and in all the world. Like the eucharist itself, prayers of blessing are the return of refracted light to its source. Blessings are always extensions and applications of the Church's central prayer.

Ministers of blessing

Who may bless? In recent centuries Christian tradition has generally reserved blessing to the ministry of a bishop or presbyter, as though they had received a power which other Christians did not share. Bishops and presbyters are the normal presidents of the eucharistic assembly because they are leaders of the local church, and it is appropriate that they offer prayers of blessing on behalf of the congregation, especially when a blessing takes place within the context of a eucharist. There are, however, other communal structures in which Christians live and meet (and other occasions of blessing than the eucharist) and there is no reason why their leaders should not offer prayers of blessing within them. It is, for instance, appropriate for parents to pray for the blessing of their families and the food of their families. Leaders of religious communities and other intentional societies may offer similar prayers. The ministers of blessing are those who exercise appropriate roles in the community where the prayer is offered. They include not only the person who presides but also all those who participate.

Any worthy celebration of the liturgy involves the whole community. In a liturgy of blessing, it is important to invite all to take part as fully as they can, by preparation, participation during the celebration, and reflection after it has been completed.

The following people are involved in blessing as an act of worship.

Recipients of the blessing. The persons who are most closely involved are the ones being blessed, or over whose actions or property the community is praying.

Readers of God's word. In a celebration in the church or a public place, it is preferable to have trained readers proclaim the word to the community. In a home or small group setting, one of the family members may be prepared ahead of time to read during the service.

Musicians and singers. In a public celebration, a cantor, choir, or group of singers, along with one or more instrumentalists, will help the community to sing, and provide music to make the event more beautiful. In a celebration in a home, family members may be encouraged to sing at least one hymn.

Servers and assistants. These are helpful in larger celebrations. At home, one of the family may assist the presider by holding the book or in other ways.

The person who presides over the celebration. This person has a particularly important ministry: the presider helps the assembled people to feel part of the Lord's family, and to join together in giving praise and thanks. It is the presider's task to see that the other ministers are prepared and ready to carry out their ministries for the good of the community. He/she will help to set a mood of reverence, and the right tone of formality or informality according to the circumstances of the celebration.

All the members of the community or family who gather for the celebration. As the chosen people of God, they are here to hear the Lord's word, to praise God, to receive a blessing, and to offer themselves anew as living sacrifices to God (see Rom 12.1–2). Their full participation, offered through Christ, gives glory to God and benefits all the people of God.

The Liturgy of Blessings

1 Shape of the Liturgy of Blessings. The following form or structure is appropriate to this type of worship.

Introductory rite. This part of the rite may be simply a greeting. Its purpose is to invite the assembled people to join in this act of worship.

Liturgy of the word. If the blessing takes place within the eucharist, it normally comes after the homily, and is followed by the intercessions. The eucharistic liturgy then continues as usual. All but the most brief forms of blessing (like thanksgiving at meals) should include proclamation of the word.

God's people listen as the word is proclaimed, as God speaks to them. Listening to the scriptures helps the gathered family or community to recognize that God loves them and is with them in this act of blessing.

Blessings which do not take place at the eucharist should include at least one reading from scripture, followed by a time of reflection and prayer in silence. However, this part of the rite may be developed with two or three readings, silent prayer, responsorial psalm, or simple gospel acclamation, as in the Sunday or weekday eucharist. A brief homily or reflection may be included to bring out the importance and meaning of the blessing in the life of this group.

Liturgy of the blessing. The people praise God and ask for the help they need. The blessing is often expressed within a prayer of praise e.g., a *berakah*) or a collect. Symbolic elements, which are described below, may be part of this rite. The rite of blessing may conclude with appropriate intercessions.

Concluding rite. This brief conclusion sends the participants back into daily living with Christ for God.

2 Symbolic elements. The ritual of blessing goes beyond the use of words. It also incorporates various symbolic elements, and is celebrated within a context of word, symbol, and gesture. These gestures may clothe the words of the blessing prayer with deeper meaning, and help the participants to become more closely involved in the celebration. Their faith may be expressed, shared, and deepened by reverent actions.

Blessing rites may include,

appropriate postures;

ritual actions — e.g., bowing, sharing a sign of peace, making the sign of the cross;

movement — gestures, processions, rhythmic movement, dance;

music;

silence for reflection and personal prayer;

use of water — in memory of our baptism into Christ's dying and rising, by such gestures as sprinkling, washing hands, dipping hands (taking care to avoid any actions which might appear to be a repetition of baptism);

use of incense — in a stationary or portable censer, carved by one or more persons, moved rhythmically around people, holy table, objects, places.

3 Form of a blessing prayer. *The Book of Alternative Services* contains a number of models of blessing.

berakah	blessing of weddings rings	532
collect	dying person	561
	new home	696
litany	baptismal water	156–157
preface	paschal candle blessing	323–324
thanksgiving	baptismal water	156–157
scriptural text	family	614
meal prayers		694–695
blessings at end of celebration		683–684
second consecration		184
		229

4 Writing blessing prayers

Liturgical communities and their leaders should be free to prepare liturgies of blessing as they are required. *The Book of Alternative Services* and this book provide models of blessings.

When a community (or presider) wishes to develop a specific prayer of blessing, traditional models should be followed. The prayer of blessing should include scriptural language or allusions, and avoid stilted language or modern slang or jargon.

The use of sense lines helps people proclaim prayers clearly and intelligibly.

Prayers should be clear, simple, and sincere. They should avoid being too wordy on one hand, or too terse on the other.

Prayers of blessing should be of a suitable length for the actual celebration, neither too short nor too long. After a blessing prayer, people should feel that they have been present at a solemn prayer of the Church, rather than a hit-and-run accident.

In any celebration, it is always necessary to consider the whole context: the people present, and their needs and expectations; the type of blessing; the mood of celebration; the place where it will be celebrated (in a church, in a public building, at home, outdoors); the liturgical season or feast; the secular occasion; the community or family event.

All these will affect the celebration, and the natural energies of these circumstances can be harnessed to make it truly an occasion of grace and joy, of seeing Christ present and active among us, and of recognizing that we are indeed the Church in this place.

The following shapes and forms of prayers may be considered by those preparing blessings.

Shape of a developed berakah. A *berakah* form of blessing may contain a number of sections or stages. At its simplest it consists of,

- a brief prayer blessing God,
- a remembrance of God's creating and saving power,
- a statement of the reason for praise.

The grace at meals suggested at the top of p. 694 in *The Book of Alternative Services* is an example.

- Blessed are you, Lord our God,
- ruler of the universe;
- you give us food from the earth.

The various parts of the prayer may be expanded and developed. It would be appropriate to add a conclusion like, "We give you thanks and praise in Jesus Christ our Lord."

As noted above, there are parallels between this structure and the great prayer of thanksgiving (the eucharistic prayer).

Shape of a collect. The collect is a prayer form which is popular in the Christian tradition. In the eucharist, this form is usually used for the opening prayer in The Gathering of the Community, for the Prayer over the Gifts, and for the variable prayer after communion. It is also used in Morning and Evening Prayer, and in other rites.

The collect has four sections or stages:

- an introductory address,
- an act of remembering God's saving work in the life of the community of faith,
- a request for help in our time,
- a conclusion offering the prayer through or with Jesus as our mediator.

These stages may be clearly seen in the collect for the Epiphany (p. 280, *The Book of Alternative Services*).

- Let us pray.

All pause for silent prayer.

Eternal God,
who by a star
led wise men to the worship of your Son,
guide by your light the nations of the earth,
that the whole world may know your glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

* * *

Notes

- 1 Some scholars hold that Isaac's blessing is, in fact, a legal action which constitutes his last will and testament, for which there are parallels in near-Eastern practice and literature. In any case, however, Isaac's power to bless was held because of his place in the order of human relationships, and (according to the story as we have received it) he was powerless to revoke his action even when it was proved that the blessing had been fraudulently obtained.
- 2 Lawrence Hoffman, "Blessings and Their Translation in Current Jewish Liturgies," *Worship*, March 1986, Vol. 60, No. 2, pp. 134–161.

Blessing of a Church or Chapel

From the point of view of the New Testament, the baptized community, not its place of worship, is the house of God (Ephesians 2.21, 1 Peter 2.5) and the temple of God (2 Corinthians 6.16). New Testament Christians sometimes went to the Jerusalem Temple to pray, and also attended synagogue liturgies, but their own typical acts of worship are identified with upper rooms (in Troas as well as Jerusalem), with the home at Emmaus, and with the domestic facilities of their members.

It was, and is, a principle of Christianity that encounter with God is possible at any time and place, that the Lord is present where two or three are gathered in his name. The Ethiopian eunuch could say, "Here is some water. What is to keep me from being baptized?" The essential ingredients of the eucharist were the basic provisions of a Mediterranean table of any class. Christian identity was found in the fellowship of disciples, bound together by God's Spirit.

The first generation of Christians was not the last group in the Church to attempt to exist without buildings. Eventually, like others after them, they were probably subverted by numbers: a domestic house is not large enough when a group has grown beyond a certain size. At that point it becomes necessary to move liturgy out of the house of this person or that person into the house of the church, thereby expanding the range of the word's meaning to include the building in which the community meets. Thus the Church meets in the church.

In the course of time the Christian use of space ceased to be merely functional and became symbolic. The arrangement of the community within the building, the provision made for the community's movement, the decoration of the building's walls, the choice of furnishings, the admission or exclusion of light — all these and more contributed to the development of the church building as a symbolic commentary on the nature of the Church, on the Christian vision of the cosmos and its destiny, and on the dynamics of the spiritual quest.

Strictly speaking, however, the Christian church building has never been the "house of God." The Church as community is the house of God; the church as building interprets the vocation of the Church. The enclosed space is not more holy than the world outside, any more than a festival is more holy than other days.

The Christian use of festival and building symbolically secures our commitment to time and space as the sphere of salvation, the earthly realm in which we pray that God's reign may come and God's will be done. At the same time, Christian festivals and Christian buildings bend our ancient human instincts for sacred time and space towards the Gospel's call to the practice of self-giving love on the plane of history, in the time between the present moment and the completion of all things.

So we Christians acquired buildings, and our buildings are a key not only to our history but also to the history of our vision of what it means to be Christian. It is not surprising that, from an early date, Christians have wanted to mark their buildings as, in some unique sense, their own.

The appropriation of buildings for liturgical use has been marked in a number of ways. At a relatively early point it would appear that the use of a building for the eucharist was considered to be, in itself, an act of blessing, or dedication, or consecration. (Obviously this marks the completion of a transition from domestic liturgies to buildings intended exclusively for liturgical use.) A second form of consecration appears among Roman Christians, for whom the remains of many beloved martyrs were understandably important: a building was set apart for liturgical use by placing the bones of a martyr within it, and the form of service used was derived from burial rites.

When Christianity became both legal and popular many pagan shrines were converted to Christian use. Christians wanted to dissociate these buildings from their past, just as their personal lives were dissociated from their pagan origins. They appear to have developed rites which were based on baptism and its attendant anointing. They literally baptized and anointed the building to make it Christian.

In the course of time these traditions were combined in rites of great complexity. Early Anglican Prayer Books did not include rites for the consecration or dedication of church buildings because England had a plentiful supply of them. Anglican rites have tended to follow a model originated by Bishop Andrews in 1620, which involves a procession to the chief liturgical furnishings in the church building, followed by the eucharist.

The older forms of blessing or consecrating church buildings are not entirely satisfactory for some Christians today. As J.G. Davies

has observed, relics cannot be regarded as necessary to a place of worship because Christian worship can (and does) exist without them, the baptism of a building as though it were a human being is little more than a legal fiction, and consecration by use raises questions about the status of places in which the eucharist is celebrated which are *not* intended for regular liturgical assembly (e.g. private houses, hospital rooms, camps, etc.).¹

The rite which follows is based on the conviction that the most appropriate form for the blessing of a church is one of thanksgiving as Davies suggests), with appropriate prayer for the community which uses it, in the context of a celebration of the eucharist.²

The rite of blessing in this liturgy involves a procession with four stations, at the font, at the lectern, at the pulpit, and at the holy table. Because many church buildings today are actually used before they are solemnly blessed, no attempt has been made to provide for the prayers at each station to precede an initial liturgical act. The community gathers for a liturgy of the word and then, as the prayers of the people on this occasion, offers thanksgiving and intercession for the building and the community to which it belongs before the ultimate thanksgiving of the eucharistic meal.

The themes of the four stations are: baptism as the definitive sign of the community of new life (at the font), the reading of the scriptures as the proclamation of the divine Word of creation and re-creation (at the lectern), preaching as the people's search for wisdom appropriate to their time and place (at the pulpit), the unity and mission of the gathered community (at the holy table).

It is important that psalms and hymns be sung during the procession to each station. They are the congregation's expression of participation in the words of blessing which are spoken by the bishop as pastor of the community.

* * *

Notes

- 1 J.G. Davies, "Consecration of Churches," in *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, ed. J.G. Davies, The Westminster Press, 1986. This article also provided data for these notes.

- 2 This rite does not provide for the use of relics, or for sprinkling with water or anointing with oil (although the *congregation*, rather than the building, might be sprinkled after the prayers at the font). Nor does it suggest that the bishop claim the place for Christ, as though Christ were not the ruler of the whole cosmos (cf. Ephesians 1.18–23, Philippians 2.10f, Colossians 1.20). There is no provision for tracing the Greek letters *chi* and *rho*, or the sign of the cross, on the floor of the building, a ritual which is reminiscent of non-Christian depictions of sacred space as the point at which heaven and earth are joined on a vertical axis which also impales the dragon of the underworld (see Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*). It is important that the symbolism in this rite emphasizes the church building as a place where Christian people find an opening into spiritual growth and maturity and into their vocation in the world, rather than into a mode of understanding which polarizes the sacred and the profane.

* * *

Concerning the Service

The Blessing of a Church or Chapel may be celebrated on the first occasion of its use. The prayers and readings assigned for the day may be used, or the bishop may substitute some or all of the prayers and readings on pp. F28–F29, except on Principal Feasts when the prayers and readings of the day should be used. The Blessing of a Church or Chapel should not be celebrated on Ash Wednesday, or during Holy Week.

If the Blessing of a Church or Chapel occurs on an occasion subsequent to its first use, it is appropriately celebrated on a Sunday or Holy Day, preferably on the Holy Day by which the congregation and its building are identified. The prayers and readings assigned for the day should therefore be used. If, for some reason, they are unsuitable, the bishop may substitute some or all of the prayers and readings on pp. F28–F29.

If the Blessing of a Church or Chapel is celebrated before the property is free of debt, this service or Thanksgiving on the Anniversary of a Parish (pp. 668–674 in The Book of Alternative Services) may be celebrated when payment of the mortgage has been completed.

Blessing of a Church or Chapel

The congregation may assemble in the church building, or in some other suitable place nearby, in which case a procession will follow the bishop's greeting and opening address.

Representatives of the congregation may greet the bishop.

The Gathering of the Community

All stand. The bishop greets the community.

Bishop The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 and the love of God,
 and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
 be with you all.

People **And also with you.**

Or from Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost,

Bishop Alleluia! Christ is risen.

People **The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Bishop May his grace and peace be with you.

People **May he fill our hearts with joy.**

The bishop addresses the people in these or similar words.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,
we have gathered here today
to hear God's word
and to eat and drink at the table of the kingdom.
Today we lift our hearts in thanksgiving
and our voices in praise.
This is a day of joyful celebration:
we have come to pray for God's blessing
on this house of assembly and worship
(which we name ...).
As the pilgrim people of God
we now join in song.

If there is a procession, the bishop may add,

Let us go to the house of the Lord!

Glory to God, or another hymn of praise, is sung.

The Collect of the Day

Bishop Let us pray.

The community may pray silently. The bishop then sings or says the collect, after which the people respond, Amen.

The Proclamation of the Word

The Readings

A first reading as appointed.

Reader A reading from ...

At the conclusion of the passage, the reader says,

 The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Silence may be kept. Then shall follow a psalm as appointed.

A second reading as appointed is read.

Reader A reading from ...

At the conclusion of the passage, the reader says,

 The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Silence may be kept. A psalm, canticle, hymn, or anthem may follow.

All stand for the Gospel.

Reader The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Reader The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
 according to ...

People **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

At the conclusion of the Gospel, the reader says,

 The Gospel of Christ.

People **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Sermon

A silence for reflection may follow.

The Nicene Creed shall be said.

The Nicene Creed

The bishop may invite the people, in these or similar words, to join in the recitation of the creed.

Bishop As living stones in God's holy temple,
let us confess our faith, as we say,

All **We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified
under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father.**

**With the Father and the Son
he is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic
and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

The Dedication of the Church

The bishop addresses the congregation in these or similar words.

Dear friends in Christ,
pray that God will bless this place.

Silence is kept.

Remember before God with thanksgiving
our forebears in faith.

Silence is kept.

Remember those who by witness,
generosity, and work
have prepared our way to this holy house,
and pray that God will bless them.

Silence is kept.

Pray that God will bless us who worship here,
and those who come after us,
our children and successors
in the pilgrimage of faith.

Other prayers may be added. Silence is kept, then the bishop continues,

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

*The bishop, with the leaders of the congregation, processes to the font.
Or, if there is enough room, the whole congregation accompanies the
bishop. Psalms 42 and 43, or a hymn, are sung.*

Water is poured into the font. The bishop says,

We thank you, Almighty God, for the gift of water.

Over water the Holy Spirit moved
in the beginning of creation.

Through water you led the children of Israel
out of their bondage in Egypt into the land of promise.

In water your son Jesus received the baptism of John
and was anointed by the Holy Spirit

as the Messiah, the Christ

to lead us, through his death and resurrection,
from the bondage of sin into everlasting life.

We thank you for the water of baptism.

In it we are buried with Christ in his death.

By it we share in his resurrection.

Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit.

Therefore in joyful obedience to your Son
we celebrate our fellowship in him in faith.

We pray that all who here pass through the water of baptism
may continue for ever

in the risen life of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,

be all honour and glory,

now and for ever. **Amen.**

The bishop and the leaders of the congregation proceed to the lectern.

*Psalm 29, or a portion of Psalm 119.89–112, or a hymn, is sung. The
bishop says,*

Blessed are you, Lord our God:

creator of the universe,

your Word brings order out of chaos,

light out of darkness;

your Word gives abundant life.

We give thanks for your word proclaimed by the prophets,

for the word of judgement in times of oppression,

for the word of hope to those in exile,

for the word of freedom to those who are enslaved.

Most of all we give you thanks for Jesus Christ,

your Word made flesh,

the pattern of your new creation,
in whose death we die to destruction,
and in whose new life we hope and live.

We give thanks for the words of human
speech that give voice to thought and feeling.
We give thanks for the words which here proclaim
the story of your eternal Word.
Open our ears to hear and our hearts to love.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

*The bishop and the leaders of the congregation proceed to the pulpit.
Canticle 11 (p. 81 in The Book of Alternative Services), or Psalm 112,
or a hymn, is sung. However, if the sermon is usually preached where the
scriptures are read, the bishop and others may remain where they are
during the canticle, psalm, or hymn. The bishop says,*

Blessed are you, Lord our God,
you are light in our darkness
and the lamp of our journey.

We give you thanks for the light of wisdom,
shining in the hearts of faithful men and women.
We give thanks for the light of interpretation,
making the pathway clear.

Most of all we give you thanks for your Wisdom among us,
for Jesus Christ, in whom your saving will is known.
Inspire with your Holy Spirit
all who teach and interpret in his name.
Give open and discerning minds
to all who listen with attention.
Make us all the agents of your light
in the darkness of our times for his sake,
who is the light of the world,
Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

*The bishop and the leaders of the congregation proceed to the holy table.
Psalm 107.1–9, or Psalm 116.10–17, or Canticle 12 (pp. 81f in The Book of
Alternative Services), or a hymn, is sung. The bishop says,*

Blessed are you, Lord our God,
giver of bread, giver of wine.
You spread a table before us in the wilderness.
You call us from a world of discord
to be your holy people;

you call us from the exile of sin
to be a royal priesthood.

Now give your blessing to all who gather here,
and give your blessing to this place.
May it be a sign of our unity,
the house of our new vision,
the womb of our witness.

May we learn peace from the care we bring each other,
may we learn justice from the holy food we share.
Unite us in the mission of your Son
whose saving love extends to every person,
whose presence reaches into every place,
Jesus Christ, who makes all things new,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Peace

Bishop The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People **And also with you.**

*The members of the community, ministers and people, may greet one another
in the name of the Lord.*

The Celebration of the Eucharist

The Preparation of the Gifts

*Representatives of the people may present the gifts of bread and wine for the
eucharist.*

The Prayer over the Gifts

*When the gifts have been prepared, the bishop may say the Prayer over the
Gifts, following which the people say, **Amen.***

The Great Thanksgiving

Bishop The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**

Bishop Lift up your hearts.
People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Bishop Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

The bishop continues.

Blessed are you, gracious God,
creator of heaven and earth;
heaven itself cannot contain you,
but you dwell with lowly people and humble hearts.
Through your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ,
you have called us to be your holy temple,
living stones, raised to the glory of your service,
built upon Christ, the foundation of our faith.
Now in this house we join our voices,
with all your people of every time and place,
to proclaim the glory of your name.

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We give thanks to you, Lord our God,
for the goodness and love
you have made known to us in creation;
in calling Israel to be your people;
in your Word spoken through the prophets;
and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus your Son.
For in these last days you sent him
to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
to be the Saviour and Redeemer of the world.
In him, you have delivered us from evil,
and made us worthy to stand before you.
In him, you have brought us
out of error into truth,
out of sin into righteousness,
out of death into life.

On the night he was handed over
to suffering and death,
a death he freely accepted,
our Lord Jesus Christ took bread;
and when he had given thanks to you,
he broke it, and gave it to his disciples,
and said, "Take, eat:
this is my body which is given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine,
and when he had given thanks,
he gave it to them,
and said, "Drink this, all of you:
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Whenever you drink it,
do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, Father, according to his command,

All **we remember his death,**
 we proclaim his resurrection,
 we await his coming in glory;

The bishop continues,

and we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,
to you, Lord of all;
presenting to you, from your creation,
this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God,
to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts,
that they may be the sacrament
of the body of Christ
and his blood of the new covenant.
Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice,
that we, made acceptable in him,
may be sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

In the fullness of time,
reconcile all things in Christ,
and make them new,
and bring us to that city of light
where you dwell with all your sons and daughters;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
the firstborn of all creation,
the head of the Church,
and the author of our salvation;
by whom, and with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, almighty Father,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

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

Or
Celebrant And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us,
we are bold to say,
All **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.**

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

Silence

The Breaking of the Bread

The bishop breaks the consecrated bread for distribution, and may say the following:

Bishop From our birth you have sustained us,
People **Let our mouth be full of your praise
and your glory all the day long.**

The Communion

The bishop invites the people to share in communion and may say,

People The gifts of God for the People of God.
Thanks be to God.

The celebrant and people then receive communion. The sacrament is given with the following words.

The body of Christ (given for you).
The blood of Christ (shed for you).

Or

The body of Christ, the bread of heaven.
The blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.

*The communicant responds each time, **Amen.***

During the breaking of the bread and the communion, psalms, hymns, and anthems may be sung.

At the conclusion of the communion, silence may be kept.

Prayer after Communion

Bishop Let us pray.

Standing, the community prays in silence. The bishop may say the Prayer after Communion appointed for the day. At the conclusion of the prayer the congregation says, Amen.

Then the following doxology may be said.

Bishop Glory to God,
All **whose power, working in us,
can do infinitely more
than we can ask or imagine.
Glory to God from generation to generation,
in the Church and in Christ Jesus,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Dismissal

The bishop may bless the people in these or similar words.

You are the people of God,
a holy nation,
a royal priesthood,
the temple of God's presence.
May God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you in this calling,
now and always. **Amen.**

The deacon, or other leader, dismisses the people in these or similar words.

Go forth in the name of Christ.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Leader Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Leader Go forth into the world,
rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Leader Let us bless the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Alternative Prayers and Readings

To be used if required.

Collect

Almighty God,
watchful and caring,
our source and our end,
all that we are and all that we have are yours.
Accept us now,
as we ask your blessing on this place
where we have come to praise your name,
to pray for forgiveness,
to know your healing power,
to hear your word,
and to be nourished by the body and blood of your Son.
Be present always to guide and to judge,
to illumine and to bless.
This we pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Old Testament Readings

Genesis 28.10–17 (Surely the Lord is in this place)

*1 Kings 8.22–30 (O hear the plea of your servant and of your people Israel
when they pray towards this place)*

1 Chronicles 29.6–19 (They gave for the service of the house of God)

Psalms and Suitable Refrains

84 (My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of the Lord)

122 (Peace be within your walls and quietness within your towers)

New Testament Readings

1 Peter 2.1–5, 9–10 (Let yourselves be built into a spiritual house)

Revelation 21.1–4, 22—22.5 (See, the home of God is among mortals)

Gospel Readings

Matthew 21.12–16 (My house shall be called a house of prayer)

*John 20.19–21 (Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be
with you”)*

Prayer over the Gifts

Gracious God,
hear the prayers of your faithful people.
Grant that all who celebrate this eucharist
may fulfil your will in reasonable service.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Prayer after Communion

God of glory,
you have made us citizens of your eternal city,
and fed us at the table of life.
May we worship you in our lives,
and proclaim your holy will in all we do.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Blessing of a Family

The form of blessing which follows is intended as a model only. Family life is both a sign and a model of the life of the Church. Both the traditional and contemporary rites of the Anglican Church of Canada, for instance, provide prayers for use on Good Friday which ask God to look graciously on the family of the Church (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 174, *The Book of Alternative Services*, p. 308). Such Christian devotion finds in family life both a common centre of shared living and a network of interdependent relationships which together illustrate and signify the nature of the Church as the company of God's children in Christ the firstborn. At the same time, the family is a church community, a community of service and worship, organized in accordance with responsibility, age, and service (not always the same), and bound together by affection, mutual dependence, and customs which often have the character of holy rites. It shares with the larger Church the ordinary imperfections and struggles of human nature.

Not all people today live in family relationships: nothing in the text which follows should be understood as a criticism of their situation. Not all relationships which this text is intended to address are necessarily based on kinship. Some families are constituted by physical parenting; some communities which resemble families are intentional and are based on decisions made by those involved. Monastic and religious communities are a kind of family, and there are other examples both small and large, formal and informal.

Concerning the Occasion

Like all solemn blessings this form should consist at least of the reading of scripture and the offering of prayer. Such prayer should include thanksgiving to God for the grace which may complete and fulfil the lives of those people who are the focus of the rite. Both readings and prayer may be changed as seems best for the people and the time.

The minister of this rite of blessing is appropriately a member of the family who most naturally assumes a role of leadership on such an occasion. If a family blessing takes place in the context of the liturgical worship of the local church (perhaps on a notable occasion, like a major wedding anniversary or birthday), the minister who presides at that liturgy may be the obvious leader of the rite of blessing (in which case the opening remarks suggested below will require adaptation). However,

within the context of the family the members of the family are ministers to each other and are therefore qualified to pray formally for God's blessing.

The greeting, Lord's Prayer, and dismissal are intended to be used when the rite of blessing takes place as an independent event. They are omitted when the rite of blessing takes place within the context of another liturgy, e.g., as part of the Prayers of the People.

Blessing of a Family

Leader The God of peace be with us.
All **Amen.**

The leader says in these or similar words.

We have come together at this time
to ask for God's blessing on this family.

(This is an important moment because ...)

We have come to give thanks for the life we share together,
to forgive one another as we pray to be forgiven,
to ask for strength to support one another
in all that lies ahead of us.

Let us first listen to God's purpose for us,
and then give thanks for the grace which fills our needs
and directs our journey.

Reading

One or more of the following or other passages of holy scripture shall be read, Ruth 1.15–17, Mk 10.13–16, Jn 15.1–7, Rom 12.9–21, 1 Cor 12.31–13.7.

Prayers

Intercessions may be offered for the family, for all families, and for those who live alone. The litany on p. 691 in The Book of Alternative Services may be used or adapted. Other prayers may be found on pp. 728–736 in The Book of Common Prayer.

Blessing

The leader says the prayer of blessing in these or similar words.

Let us keep silence and pray for God's blessing.

After a period of silence the leader continues,

Blessed are you, Lord our God,
centre of being and source of life:
we give you thanks and praise
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We give you thanks for life and breath,
for eyes to see and ears to hear,
for touch and taste and warmth,
for food and shelter,
for minds to think and hearts to love.

We give you thanks for the life of this family,
for the strength and love *we* give one another
in this journey of life:
for joy in times of celebration,
for support in times of trouble,
for forgiveness in times of failure.

Bless this family, we pray.
Make *us* strong in love,
committed in affection,
grateful for our differences,
eager in seeking the good of others,
generous in hospitality,
daring in the quest for justice and peace.
Bless *us* within the walls of *our* home;
bless *us* when *we* are apart.
Make this family a sign of your kingdom,
and an instrument of your grace.

The Lord bless *us* and keep *us*;
the Lord's face shine upon *us* with grace;
the Lord's countenance rise upon *us*
and give *us* peace.

Amen.

Look graciously, Lord, on this your family,
and teach us to pray,
Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

Or

And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us,
we are bold 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,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Leader Let us bless the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Prayers in a New Place of Residence

Concerning the Service

The blessing of a home has traditionally involved a procession from room to room, the presiding minister offering an appropriate prayer in each room. The following rite may be used in that way as indicated, or all the prayers may be said in a central place.

The rite which follows is based upon the conviction that a space is sanctified by the presence and activity of the people of God. This rite asks for God's blessing on the inhabitants of the home, their friends and guests, and on the life of those who will live there.

The presiding minister, members of the household, and friends gather in an appropriate room. If the eucharist is celebrated, a table should be prepared for this purpose.

Prayers in a New Place of Residence

The presiding minister greets the people.

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

People **And also with you.**

Minister Let us pray.

The community may pray silently. The minister then says or sings the collect of the day (or the following collect).

God of love,
whose will it is that all the world
should live in harmony,
grant that the life and worship of this home
may witness to your coming reign of peace,
through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

An appropriate reading (or readings) follow the collect. If the readings proper to the day are not appropriate, the reading may be selected from the list below. If the eucharist is celebrated, a reading from the Gospels and a homily are included. Hymns or other suitable songs may be chosen for the occasion.

Following the reading(s) (and homily), the presiding minister addresses the people in these or similar words.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,
in his ministry Jesus accepted the hospitality
of those who opened their homes to him.
Jesus visited the home
of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus at Bethany,
and was welcomed at their table.

At Emmaus, his disciples recognized him
in the breaking of bread.

The apostles broke bread and led the prayers
in the homes of the faithful.

We gather in the new home of *N* (or *N* and *N*)
to ask God's blessing
(and to break the bread of life).

A member of the household, a friend, or another appointed person leads the prayers. Individual petitions may be modified, added, or omitted as needed or appropriate.

Entrance

Leader God of our beginning and our end:
accompany *N* (or *N* and *N*)
in *his/her/their* going out and coming in.

People **May he/she/they be blessed by you for ever.**

Study

Leader God of truth,
in you we live and move and have our being:
enlighten the *heart(s)* and *mind(s)* of *N* (or *N* and *N*)
in *his/her/their* pilgrimage to know and love you.

People **May he/she/they be blessed by you for ever.**

Bedroom

Leader God of life and love,
you are the true rest of your people:
give rest and refreshment to your *servant(s)*.

People **May he/she/they be blessed by you for ever.**

Child's Room

Leader Lover of children,
you embrace and bless the young:
bring *N* (or *N* and *N*) to the full stature of Christ.

People **May he/she/they be blessed by you for ever.**

Guest Room

Leader God of pilgrims and friend of strangers,
may *N* (or *N* and *N*) welcome others
into this home as Christ himself.

People **May he/she/they be blessed by you for ever.**

Bathroom

Leader Creating Breath of life,
give health of body and wholeness of being
to *N* (or *N* and *N*).

People **May he/she/they be blessed by you for ever.**

Workroom

Leader Creating God,
sculptor of the land and sea,
be present with *N* (or *N* and *N*)
as he/she/they share the joy of your holy work.

People **May he/she/they be blessed by you for ever.**

Kitchen

Leader God of bounty,
you open your hands
and fill all living things with plenteousness:
bless the hands that prepare the daily bread
of this home.

People **May he/she/they be blessed by you for ever.**

Dining Room

Leader Ruler of the universe,
you give us food and drink to sustain our lives:
may your *servant(s)* be grateful
for all your mercies
and mindful of the needs of others.

People **May he/she/they be blessed by you for ever.**

Terrace or Garden

Leader Source of all life,
you have made us the stewards of the earth:
prosper *N* (or *N* and *N*)
in their care of soil and plants,
and let the knowledge of your presence
grow in them.

People **May he/she/they be blessed by you for ever.**

Living or Family Room

The following prayer shall be used as the conclusion of the prayers.

Minister Blessed are you, O Lord our God,
you are pleased to dwell among us
and to fill our lives with your presence.
May *he/she/they* who *dwell(s)* here
be filled with your love.
May this home be a haven of peace
and a sign of your promised reign
of justice and peace.
Glory to you for ever and ever,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The presiding minister then says to the people,

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

If the eucharist is not celebrated, the rite concludes with the Peace (and a meal).

When the eucharist is celebrated, members of the household present the bread and wine at the offertory.

The Prayer over the Gifts proper to the day, or the following prayer, may be recited.

Loving God,
receive all we offer you this day.
May this home be a sign of your transforming love.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

Either Eucharistic Prayer 1 or Eucharistic Prayer 5 is appropriate.

The Prayer after Communion proper to the day, or the following prayer, may be recited.

How wonderful you are, gracious God,
in all your dealings with your people!
Stay among us, we pray,
to bind us together in your love and peace.
May we serve you,
and others in your name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The liturgy concludes with the doxology and the dismissal.

* * *

Suitable Readings and Psalms

Old Testament Readings

Gen 18.1–8 (The Lord appeared to Abraham ... as he sat at the entrance of his tent)

Jos 24.14–15 (As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord)

Is 65.21–25 (They shall build houses and inhabit them)

Psalms and Suitable Refrains

Ps 84 (Happy are they who put their trust in you)

Ps 112.1–7 (Happy are they who fear the Lord)

Ps 127.1–5 (Unless the Lord builds the house, their labour is in vain who build it)

New Testament Readings

Rom 12.9–17 (Extend hospitality to strangers)

Col. 3.12–17 (Bear with one another and ... forgive each other)

1 Jn 4.7–12 (If we love one another, God lives in us)

Gospel Readings

Mt 6.25–33 (Will he not much more clothe you)

Mt 10. 40–42 (Whoever welcomes you welcomes me)

Lk 12.22–31 (How much more will he clothe you)

Jn 15.1–11 (I am the vine, you are the branches)

Jn 15.12–17 (Love one another)

Blessing of a Home

Concerning the Service

Prayers in a New Place of Residence are provided on pp. F35–F40 in this book. The service which follows may be used when people wish to ask God's blessing on their home at times other than the beginning of their residence in a new place. Among some people it is customary to pray for God's blessing on a home each year after one of the great festivals. Some people wish to pray for God's blessing on their home after a stressful or tragic event, such as a violent quarrel or a death. This form of service may be used in these and other appropriate circumstances and may be adapted as required.

The presiding minister may be a bishop, priest, deacon, or lay person, unless the eucharist is to be celebrated, when the presiding minister shall be a bishop or priest.

Blessing of a Home

The Gathering of the Community

When all have gathered in a central room, the presiding minister says,

Blessed is the kingdom of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever,
and to the ages of ages.

All **Amen.**

The congregation says together,

**Behold now, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord,*
you that stand by night in the house of the Lord.**

**Lift up your hands in the holy place and bless the Lord;*
the Lord who made heaven and earth bless
you out of Zion.**

Minister Let us pray.
God our creator and redeemer,
give us grateful hearts and willing hands,
that we may worthily praise your name
and build your kingdom among all people,
to the glory of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The Proclamation of the Word

The Readings

One reading at least shall be read. If the eucharist is to be celebrated there shall be two readings at least, one of which shall be from the Gospels. The reading(s) proper to the day may be used, or a selection may be made from the table of suitable readings at the end of this section.

When there are two readings, a psalm (such as 43, 127, or 133) may be said between the readings, or a hymn may be sung.

If the eucharist is celebrated there shall be a homily.

Intercessions or Prayers of the People

The intercessions may be led by friends, members of the household, the presiding minister, or another minister. The litany on pp. 691f in The Book of Alternative Services may be used. Litany No. 8 on p. 117 in The Book of Alternative Services or Litany No. 13 on p. 120f in The Book of Alternative Services may be used with suitable adaptation. Other prayers of intercession may be said for the householders, their families, and friends. Suitable prayers may be found on p. 696 in The Book of Alternative Services. The Intercessions or Prayers of the People may conclude with,

Prayer of Blessing

The presiding minister says,
Blessed are you, O God,
for you framed the universe
as the dwelling-place of your glory
and your Word pitched a tent in our midst.
Grant that those who dwell in this place
may find only harmony and peace
May they, and all who search for you,
find shelter in your presence.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The presiding minister greets the people with the words of the Peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

The people may greet each other. If the eucharist is not to be celebrated, the liturgy concludes with the Lord's Prayer and a dismissal. If the eucharist is to be celebrated, the liturgy continues with the preparation of the gifts.

The Prayer over the Gifts and the Prayer after Communion proper to the day may be used.

* * *

Readings Suitable for the Blessing of a Home

Old Testament Readings

Gen 18.1–10a (The Lord appeared to Abraham ... as he sat at the entrance to his tent)

Jos 24.14–17 (As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord)

Sir 4.11–16 (The Lord blesses the place [Wisdom] enters)

Psalms and Suitable Refrains

Ps 84 (Happy are they who put their trust in you)

Ps 112.1–7 (Happy are they who fear the Lord)

Ps 127.1–5 (Unless the Lord builds the house, their labour is in vain who build it)

New Testament Readings

Rom 12.9–21 (Extend hospitality to strangers)

Eph 4.25–32 (Be kind to one another)

Gospel Readings

Mk 1.29–30 (They entered the house of Simon and Andrew)

Lk 10.5–9 (Say, 'Peace to this house!')

Lk 10.38–42 (A woman named Martha welcomed [Jesus] into her home)

Lk 19.1–9 (Zacchaeus, ... I must stay at your house today)

Lk 24.28–32 (Stay with us, because it is almost evening)

Blessing of Home Animals

Concerning the Occasion

Animals are a vital part of the creation of which human beings have been given stewardship. They provide us with companionship, and in some cases assist in independent daily living. The rite which follows is intended for use when it is desired to give thanks and to pray for God's blessing on pets and other domestic animals. It is anticipated that a significant number of children will be present, and their participation and leadership should be encouraged. The service may take place on an occasion such as the feast of a saint or a Sunday whose proper readings illustrate the theme. The service may be modified as appropriate to the circumstances.

Portions of this material may be incorporated into the Sunday liturgy of a congregation, but this service should not replace the Sunday liturgy and the readings proper to the day.

Blessing of Home Animals

The Gathering of the Community

When the community has gathered the presiding minister says,

Let us bless our God,
creator and giver of all.

People **Blessed be God, now and for ever. Amen.**

A canticle or hymn may follow.

The Proclamation of the Word

The Readings

One or more of the following, or another passage, is read.

Gen 2.18–20a (The Lord God formed every animal of the field.)

Gen 9.8–17 (This is the sign of the covenant ... between me ... and every living creature)

Is 11.1–9 (They will not hurt or destroy)

Mt 6.25–34 (Look at the birds of the air)

Mt 18.10–14 (If a shepherd has a hundred sheep)

Jn 10.2–5 (The [shepherd] calls his own sheep by name)

Psalms 8 or Psalm 65 may follow the reading.

A homily or other reflection on the reading(s) may follow.

Intercessions and Thanksgivings

A deacon or other member of the community may lead the prayers.

Leader We thank you, God, for the gift of life: for the beauty and wonder of creation, and for our own life which comes from you.

People **Glory to you for ever and ever.**

Leader We thank you for the richness of animal life: for fish and birds, insects, reptiles, and mammals.

People **Glory to you for ever and ever.**

Leader We thank you for the animals who give us faithful companionship, joy when we are happy and comfort when we are sad.

People **Glory to you for ever and ever.**

Leader We thank you for calling us to care for these animals. May we learn love and respect for all living things.

People **Glory to you for ever and ever.**

The minister says the prayer of blessing.

Blessed are you, living, loving God.

All creation praises you,

yet you have given the earth into our hands.

You made animals as our companions,

that in caring for them

we might learn to love and care

for all your creatures,

and find in them a sign of your grace.

As we fulfil this calling

may we draw close to you,

the giver of all life,

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer may be said.

The minister may dismiss the congregation.

Go forth in the name of Christ.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Minister Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Minister Go forth into the world,
rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Minister Let us bless the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Blessing of Farm Animals

Since time immemorial animals and human beings have co-existed in close relationship and together form a part of the web of life.

Prehistoric hunting-gathering societies were dependent on animals to sustain life, not only for food but also for shelter and clothing. The domestication of animals has brought humans into greater dependence on animals as beasts of burden, assistants in hunting and herding, and as a source of food and other products (fleece, milk, etc.).

As part of the created order as it has developed, animals are a cause of gratitude, and deserve respect and humane treatment. Farmers and ranchers who raise animals contribute honorably to the provision of some of the necessities of life.

Concerning the Occasion

The rite may be used on suitable occasions in rural life to sanctify the work of the farm/ranch. The service may be modified as appropriate to the circumstances of time and place.

Blessing of Farm Animals

The Gathering of the Community

When the community has gathered the presiding minister says,

Let us bless our God,
creator and giver of all.

People **Blessed be God, now and for ever. Amen.**

This canticle, or another canticle or hymn, may follow.

**Glorify the Lord, all you works of the Lord,*
sing praise, and highly exalt God for ever.
In the firmament of his power, glorify the Lord,*
sing praise, and highly exalt God for ever.**

**Let the earth glorify the Lord.*
Glorify the Lord, O mountains and hills,
and all that grows on the earth,*
sing praise, and highly exalt God for ever.**

**Glorify the Lord, O springs of water, seas, and streams,*
O whales and all that moves in the waters.
All birds of the air, glorify the Lord,*
sing praise, and highly exalt God for ever.**

**Glorify the Lord, O beasts of the wild,*
and all you flocks and herds.
O men and women everywhere, glorify the Lord,*
sing praise, and highly exalt God for ever.**

**Let us glorify the Lord: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,*
sing praise, and highly exalt God for ever.
In the firmament of his power, glorify the Lord,*
sing praise, and highly exalt God for ever.**

The Proclamation of the Word

Reading

One of the following, or another passage of scripture, is read.

Gen 1.20–31a (God saw ... that ... it was very good)

Gen 9.8–17 (This is the sign of the covenant)

Is 11.1–9 (They will not hurt or destroy)

Mt 6.25–34 (Look at the birds of the air)

Mt 18.10–14 (If a shepherd has a hundred sheep)

Jn 10.2–5 (The [shepherd] calls his own sheep by name)

Psalm 8 or Psalm 65 may follow the reading.

Intercessions

It is appropriate to use Litany 2 in The Book of Alternative Services. The following may be inserted as the fourth and fifth petitions.

Give us grateful hearts for the animals of pasture and range which serve the many needs of humanity.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Encourage those whose labour helps to provide abundantly from the vast treasure of your bounty.

Lord, hear our prayer.

The minister says the prayer of blessing.

Blessed are you, Giver of life,
Form of our form and Breath of our breath.
This living world you make our home;
you put your creatures in our care.
Forgive, we pray, our carelessness and waste,
renew our hearts and renew the face of the earth.
Blessed are you for life and for new life.

**We give you thanks and praise
in Jesus Christ our Lord.**

The Lord's Prayer may be said.

The minister may dismiss the congregation.

Go forth in the name of Christ.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Minister Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Minister Go forth into the world,
rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Minister Let us bless the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Blessing of Fisheries

Concerning the Occasion

Fishing is an important form of livelihood for many. It is a hazardous occupation. This rite may be used for the blessing of fishing fleets as well as individual boats and gear. The service may be modified as appropriate to circumstances.

Blessing of Fisheries

The Gathering of the Community

When the community has gathered the presiding minister says,

Let us bless our God,
creator and giver of all.

People **Blessed be God, now and for ever. Amen.**

All now say,

O Lord, how manifold are your works!*
in wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.

**Yonder is the great and wide sea
with its living things too many to number,*
creatures both small and great.**

**There move the ships,
and there is that Leviathan,*
which you have made for the sport of it.**

**All of them look to you*
to give them their food in due season.**

You give it to them; they gather it;*
you open your hand, and they are
filled with good things.

You hide your face, and they are terrified;*
you take away their breath,
and they die and return to theft dust.

You send forth your Spirit, and they are created;*
and so you renew the face of the earth.

May the glory of the Lord endure for ever;*
may the Lord rejoice in all his works.

He looks at the earth and it trembles;*
he touches the mountains and they smoke.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live;*
I will praise my God while I have my being.

May these words of mine please him;*
I will rejoice in the Lord.

The Proclamation of the Word

Reading

One of the following may be read.

Job 38.4–11 (Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?)

Mt 14.22–33 (You of little faith, why did you doubt?)

Jn 21.1–24 (Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some)

Psalm 8, Psalm 107.23–32 or Psalm 148 may follow the reading.

Intercessions

It is appropriate to use Litany 1 from The Book of Alternative Services. After the petition for good weather, the following petitions should be inserted.

For the safety of those who labour on the waters,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For clean and abundant waters, and for ourselves
as stewards of the seas, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

The minister says the prayer of blessing.

Blessed are you, O God,
whose Spirit hovered over the deep
and filled it with all manner of living things.
May the sea continue to teem with abundant life.
May those who move upon the face of the waters
rejoice in its beauty and find safety in its perils.
May Christ, who calmed the storm,
and filled the nets of his disciples,
bring us all to the harbour of light and peace. **Amen.**

The minister may dismiss the congregation,

Go forth in the name of Christ.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Minister Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Minister Go forth into the world,
rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Minister Let us bless the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Blessing of Forests and Forestry

Forests are an important part of the ecology of planet earth, for they are the major source of oxygen generation. In addition, they serve as important economic resources and the focus of much recreational activity. For many of the Native People they are home. Renewed respect for our forests is an important part of humanity's stewardship of creation in an increasingly technological culture. The service may be modified as appropriate to the circumstances of time and place.

Blessing of Forests and Forestry

The Gathering of the Community

When the community has gathered the presiding minister says,

Let us bless our God,
creator and giver of all.

People **Blessed be God, now and for ever. Amen.**

All now say,

A new hymn we sing to our God.

**LORD you are great and glorious,
wonderful in strength, invincible.**

Let the whole creation serve you:

for you spoke, and all things came into being.

You sent out your breath and it formed them:

no one is able to resist your voice.

Mountains and seas are stirred to their depths:

rocks melt like wax at your presence.

But to those who revere you:

you will continue to show mercy.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

**as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen.**

(Judith 16.13–15)

The Proclamation of the Word

Reading

One of the following may be read.

Gen 1.9–13, 26–31 (Trees of every kind)

Pr 8.22–31 (The Lord created [Wisdom] at the beginning of his work)

Ezek 17.22–24 (I bring low the high tree, I make high the low tree)

Rev 21.1–4; 22.1–5 (*The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations*)

Mk 13.28–30 (*From the fig tree learn its lesson*)

Psalm 96 may follow the reading.

Intercessions

The Thanksgiving Litany in The Book of Alternative Services, p. 128, is appropriate. Petitions similar to the following may be inserted after the first petition.

For a renewed spirit of stewardship of all created things,
let us pray to the Lord.

For will to make the air clean, the water pure,
and the soil rich, let us pray to the Lord.

For renewed reverence before the mystery of life,
let us pray to the Lord.

For the safety and well-being of those who work
in the forests, let us pray to the Lord.

The minister says the prayer of blessing.

Blessed are you, O God,
creator of forest and plain.

You have given us the trees
as a homeland of abundant life,
a place of shelter and play,
and a resource for the work of human hands.

Renew within us a sense of the unity of all things.

May we discover in the forest the beauty of your presence,
so generations to come may praise your Holy Name
through Jesus Christ, your Word,
in the power of your Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The Thanksgiving Prayers on pp. 129f in The Book of Alternative Services are also appropriate.

The minister may dismiss the congregation,

Go forth in the name of Christ.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Minister Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Minister Go forth into the world,
rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Minister Let us bless the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Blessing of Mines

Concerning the Occasion

Mining constitutes an important source of livelihood in many parts of Canada. Minerals are a significant part of the abundance of creation of which humanity has been granted stewardship. The service may be modified as appropriate to the circumstances of time and place.

Blessing of Mines

The Gathering of the Community

When the community has gathered the presiding minister says,

Let us bless our God,
creator and giver of all.

People **Blessed be God, now and for ever. Amen.**

All now say,

**By your word, O Lord, all things are made;
and all your creatures do your will.**

**The sun looks down on everything with its light,
and your work is full of your glory.**

**You have not empowered even your holy ones
to recount all your marvellous works,
which you, the Lord Almighty have established
so that the universe may stand firm in your glory.**

**You search out the abyss and the human heart;
you understand their innermost secrets.
For you, Most High, know all that may be known;
you see from of old the things that are to come.**

**You disclose what has been and what is to be,
and you reveal the traces of hidden things.
No thought escapes you,
and nothing is hidden from you.**

**You have set in order the splendours of your wisdom;
you are from all eternity one and the same.
Nothing can be added or taken away,
and you need no one to be your counsellor.**

**How desirable are all your works,
and how sparkling they are to see!
Who could ever tire of seeing your glory?**

(See Sir 42.15b–22, 25b)

The Proclamation of the Word

Reading

One of the following or another passage of scripture is read.

Dt 8.6–18 (A land whose stones are iron)

Job 28.1–28 ([Wisdom] cannot be gotten for gold)

Rev 21.9–21 (The holy city Jerusalem coming down)

Psalm 139.6–17 may follow the reading.

Intercessions

The Thanksgiving Litany in The Book of Alternative Services, p. 128, is appropriate. Petitions such as the following may be inserted after the first petition of that litany.

For the richness of mountains
and the abundance of minerals,

We thank you, Lord.

The minister says the prayer of blessing.

Blessed are you, O God,
whose hand has enriched the earth
with minerals for our use.

We bless you for the gifts which we discover in the earth,
and we pray that you will so fill us with wisdom
that our miners may labour in safety,
and our children may continue to bless your name
for the bounty of rock and soil.

We praise you through Jesus Christ,
the Rock of our salvation. **Amen.**

The prayers of General Thanksgiving in The Book of Alternative Services (pp. 129f) are also appropriate.

The minister may dismiss the congregation,

Go forth in the name of Christ.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Minister Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Minister Go forth into the world,
 rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Minister Let us bless the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Blessing of Seeds at Planting Time

Concerning the Occasion

This order may be used for the blessing of seeds or seedlings. The service may be modified as appropriate to the circumstances of time and place.

Blessing of Seeds at Planting Time

The Gathering of the Community

When the community has gathered the presiding minister says,

Let us bless our God,
creator and giver of all.

People **Blessed be God, now and for ever. Amen.**

All now say,

Bless the Lord, O my soul;*

O Lord my God, how excellent is your greatness!
You are clothed with majesty and splendour.

You water the mountains from your dwelling on high;*
the earth is fully satisfied by the fruit of your works.

You make grass grow for flocks and herds*
and plants to serve humankind;

That they may bring forth food from the earth,*
and wine to gladden our hearts,

Oil to make a cheerful countenance,*
and bread to strengthen the heart.

You send forth your Spirit, and they are created;*
and so you renew the face of the earth.

Bless the Lord, O my soul*

Hallelujah!

(104.13–16,31–37)

The Proclamation of the Word

Reading

One of the following may be read.

Gen 1.27–31 (I have given you every plant yielding seed)

Is 55.10–13 (Giving seed to the sower)

Sir 43.1–33 (The Lord has made all things)

2 Cor 9.6–10 ([God] who supplies seed to the sower)

Mt 13.31–32 (The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed)

Mark 4. 26–32 (With what can we compare the kingdom of God)

Psalms 65 or Psalm 148 may follow the reading.

Intercessions

It is appropriate to use Litany 1 or Litany 2 in The Book of Alternative Services. If Litany 1 is used the following petition is inserted after the petition for good weather.

For deliverance from despair in times of drought or flood,
and from wastefulness in times of plenty,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For rich and fertile land and for ourselves as stewards
of the soil, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

If Litany 2 is used the following petition is inserted after the petition for the proper use of creation.

Deliver us from despair in times of drought or flood,
and from wastefulness in times of plenty.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Give us rich and fertile land and make us faithful stewards
of the soil.

Lord, hear our prayer.

The minister says the prayer of blessing.

Blessed are you,
God of planting and of harvest,
you have called us to till the earth
and make it fruitful.

Work in our lives the beauty, peace, abundance, and joy which are the tokens of your presence in all creation, that by these signs we may see the splendour of your love and praise you through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Or

Blessed are you, Creator of the universe.
May the pastures be rich for grazing,
and the hills be clothed with joy;
may the fields be covered with grain;
and may we, with all creation,
shout for joy and sing your praise
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The minister may dismiss the congregation,

Go forth in the name of Christ.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Minister Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Minister Go forth into the world,
rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Minister Let us bless the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Prayer for the Environment

There is increasing concern that the world, as the environment of life, is being destroyed by pollution, exploitation, and waste. More and more people recognize that the human race is in danger of corrupting the very envelope in which life subsists, and that we do not know what to do about it.

For Christians in particular, misuse of the environment is a spiritual problem. Christians believe that it is God's purpose that the whole created order should be transparent to the divine Spirit, should be an outward and visible sign of God's being, generosity, and love. Misuse of creation frustrates that purpose and creates a problem which is theological, sacramental, and devotional.

The creation stories of Genesis provide the basis of a theology of the environment. They tell us that creation is not an enchanted forest dominated by the random and arbitrary caprice of elemental spirits, but is the gift of God. They tell us that the material order is not the product of God's shadow or opposite, but is good because God gave it. They tell us that people are not alien spirits destined eventually to escape their material bonds, but are intended to be at home here, living in responsible harmony with the world of which they are part. The rebellion of human pride may be an impediment to complete harmony, but it is not an excuse for destructive behaviour and the bible in its long-range view looks forward to a remedy and not to despair.

Creation and new creation form a central strand of the salvation story of the bible. The God who creates, creates again. The eternal Word through whom all things were made is the first-born of the new creation. One of the final images of the bible describes not people going up to heaven but heaven coming down to earth (Rev 21.1—22.5), to fulfil and complete this world of water, trees, mountains, nations, and food. God's new creation embraces the whole natural order and not merely souls; degradation of the natural order is, consequently, blasphemy.

We face the dilemma that we (the human race) are destroying our own environment and do not know how to stop. Any dilemma is an opportunity for prayer, but especially this dilemma with its awful ultimacy. When we pray in a time of dilemma we do not ask God to impose a solution from outside; we ask for help in our helplessness to find a solution within.

Prayer for ourselves and our environment should be a constant feature of our liturgy, not merely the subject of special occasions. The future of our environment is not one cause among many and should not be relegated to a special Sunday once a year. The material which follows identifies readings proposed for various points in the liturgical year which raise issues related to our world context. A litany follows which may be used as it is, with one of the prayers which follow it; alternatively one or more of the petitions in the litany may be excerpted for use in the intercessions and prayers of the people, in this or an adapted form.

Readings in Year A

Advent 2: Is 11.1–10 (They will not hurt or destroy)

Lent 1: Gen 2.4b–9, 15–17, 25—3.7 (The Lord God planted a garden in Eden)

Lent 5: Ezek 37.1–14 (I will place you on your own soil)

Easter Vigil: Gen 1.1—2.2 (God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good)

Ps 33 (By the word of the Lord were the heavens made)

Gen 7.1–5, 11–18; 8.6–18; 9.8–13 (I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature)

Ps 46 (There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God)

Is 54.5–14 (In righteousness you shall be established)

Is 55.1–11 (Ho, everyone who thirsts)

Canticle: Song of Thanksgiving, Is 12.2–6

Bar 3.9–15, 32—4.4 (The one who prepared the earth for all time. ... This is our God)

Ps 19 (The heavens are telling the glory of God)

Ezek 36.24–28 (I will sprinkle clean water upon you)

Ps 42 (As the deer longs for the water-brooks)

Ezek 37.1–14 (I will place you on your own soil)

Zeph 3.14–20 (The Lord has taken away the judgements against you)

Ps 98 (Let the rivers clap their hands and let the hills ring out with joy)

Pentecost: Ps 104 (O Lord, how manifold are your works)

Proper 1 (Baptism of the Lord): Is 42.1–9 (God ... who created the heavens and ... spread out the earth)

Proper 20: Ex 16.2–15 (Your fill of bread in the morning)

Proper 30: Ru 2.1–13 (Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain)

Rogation or Harvest: Dt 8.7–18 (A good land, a land with flowing streams)

Ps 65 (You make the dawn and the dusk to sing for joy)

2 Cor 9.6–15 (He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food)

Jl 2.21–27 (Do not fear, O soil; be glad and rejoice)

Ps 126 (Restore our fortunes, O God, like the watercourses of the Negev)

Mt 6.25–33 (Consider the lilies of the field)

Dt 26.1–11 (The Lord ... gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey)

Ps 100 (Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands)

Readings in Year B

Lent 1: Gen 9.8–17 (I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you)

Easter Vigil: as in Year A

Pentecost: as in Year A

Proper 1 (Baptism of the Lord): Gen 1.1–5 (In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth)

Proper 17: 2 Sam 12.1–14 (The poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb)

Proper 23: Jas 1.17–27 (Religion that is pure and undefiled ... is ... to care for orphans and widows in their distress)

Proper 24: Jas 2.1–5, 8–10, 14–17 (If a brother or sister is naked ... and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?)

Proper 31: Dt 6.1–9 (A land flowing with milk and honey)

Rogation or Harvest: as in Year A

Readings in Year C

Lent 1: Dt 26.1–11 (A land flowing with milk and honey)

Easter Vigil: as in Year A

Pentecost: as in Year A

Proper 1 (Baptism of the Lord): Is 61.1–4 (They shall raise up the former devastations)

Proper 14: 1 Kgs 21.1–3, 17–21 (I will not give you my ancestral inheritance)

Gal 6.7–18 (Let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest-time)

Proper 26: Jl 2.23–30 (The threshing floors shall be full of grain)

1 Tim 6.6–19 (If we have food and clothing, we will be content)

Proper 27 Am 5.6–7, 10–17 (In all the vineyards there shall be wailing)

Rogation or Harvest: as in Year A

* * *

Prayer for the Environment

Creator of the land, the water, and the sky, come and renew the face of the whole earth: O Lord, hear our prayer.

Giver of life, we are the sons and daughters of your holy breath; give us new purpose to care in love for the world of your making: O Lord, hear our prayer.

Saviour of the world, touch our lips in the power of your new creation, that we may proclaim your word of life: O Lord, hear our prayer.

God of steadfast love, turn our hearts and the hearts of the whole human family to care in thanksgiving and reverence for the world you have given: O Lord, hear our prayer.

God of sparrows and wild flowers, teach us to see and preserve the simple beauty of the gifts of your hands: O Lord, hear our prayer.

Friend of the helpless and the poor, strengthen the will of people everywhere to use your creation to the benefit of all:
O Lord, hear our prayer.

Creator of the fruitful earth,
you made us stewards of all things.
Give us grateful hearts for all your goodness,
and steadfast wills to use your bounty well,
that the whole human family,
today and in generations to come,
may with us give thanks for the riches of your creation.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

Or

Lord God,
joy marks your presence;
beauty, abundance, and peace
are the tokens of your work in all creation.
Work also in our lives,
that by these signs we may see the splendour of your love
and praise you through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Or

Almighty God,
your whole creation declares your glory.
May we perceive you in all your works
and live in the light of your righteousness,
through him who is the light of the world,
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Or

God our Father,
you have created us as your people,
and you sustain us by your hand.
Help us always to give you thanks,
for you alone are worthy
of thanksgiving and praise and honour,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

Or

O God, the source of all life,
you have filled the earth with beauty.
Open our eyes to see your gracious hand in all your works,

that rejoicing in your whole creation
we may learn to serve you with gladness,
for the sake of him through whom all things were made,
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Or

O God of eternal light,
heaven and earth are the work of your hands,
and all creation sings your praise and beauty.
As in the beginning, by your Spirit,
you gave life and order to all that is,
so by the same Spirit redeem us and all things,
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

