

# Commissioning of Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers

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This service is offered as an example. Ministers and worship leaders are free and encouraged to choose appropriate Bible passages, and to write or prepare their own prayers and material to use alongside or instead of the examples here. **There are, however, some parts of the text that must be used and these are indicated by the orange boxes.**

A commissioning service is conducted by the Synod after accreditation by the Ministries Committee on behalf of the General Assembly. The commissioning may be a special service and the Synod Lay Preaching Advocate/Commissioner may share in the leadership of it. Where the service is part of an act of worship at a meeting of the synod, the Moderator or their representative normally presides. If the service takes place on a Sunday at the lay preacher's own church, a representative of the synod normally presides.

Please adapt the pronouns in the service as appropriate.

The act of commissioning should follow the proclamation of the Word.

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## Introduction

Hear this, all you peoples; give ear, all inhabitants of the world, both low and high, rich and poor together. My mouth shall speak wisdom; the meditation of my heart shall be understanding.

Psalm 49:1-3

or

Come, listen, all who revere God, and I will tell you what the Most High has done in my life. My mouth cried to God, my tongue extolled the Eternal One. Blessed be the Most High who has not left undone my prayers nor removed loving kindness from me.

Psalm 66:16-17, 20

or

God, our Sovereign, has bestowed on me a disciple's tongue that I may discern how to help those who are tired and weary with a word. Each morning God rouses me and excites my ear to listen as a disciple.

Isaiah 50:4

In the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ,  
the only Head of the Church,  
we are now to commission ... N ... as an Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher.  
... N ... has been commended by the ... X ... Synod  
and accredited by the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church.

## Statement by the Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher

The Lay Preacher makes a statement concerning *their* faith and sense of calling.

### **Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church**

This Statement (Basis of Union, Schedule D) is read in one of the approved forms such as the one below:

This Statement is to be read aloud in one of the two prescribed forms.

**VERSION II** is printed here, however **VERSION I** may be used if preferred.

With the whole Christian Church  
the United Reformed Church believes in one God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**All** **The living God, the only God, ever to be praised.**

The life of faith to which we are called is the Spirit's gift continually received through the Word, the Sacraments and our Christian life together.

**All** **We acknowledge the gift and answer the call, giving thanks for the means of grace.**

The highest authority for what we believe and do  
is God's Word in the Bible,  
alive for his people today through the help of the Spirit.

**All We respond to this Word, whose servants we are  
with all God's people through the years.**

We accept with thanksgiving to God  
the witness to the catholic faith  
in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.

We acknowledge the declarations made in our own tradition  
by Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Churches of Christ  
in which they stated the faith  
and sought to make its implications clear.

**All Faith alive and active: gift of an eternal source,  
renewed for every generation.**

We conduct our life together according to the Basis of Union  
in which we give expression to our faith  
in forms which we believe  
contain the essential elements of the Church's life,  
both catholic and reformed;  
but we affirm our right and readiness, if the need arises,  
to change the Basis of Union  
and to make new statements of faith  
in ever new obedience to the living Christ.

**All Our crucified and risen Lord,  
who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection.**

Held together in the Body of Christ  
through the freedom of the Spirit,  
we rejoice in the diversity of the Spirit's gifts  
and uphold the rights of personal conviction.  
For the sake of faith and fellowship  
it shall be for the church to decide  
where differences of conviction hurt our unity and peace.

**All We commit ourselves to speak the truth in love  
and grow together in the peace of Christ.**

We believe that Christ gives his Church  
a government distinct from the government of the state.  
In things that affect obedience to God  
the Church is not subordinate to the state,  
but must serve the Lord Jesus Christ,  
its only Ruler and Head.

Civil authorities are called to serve God's will of justice and peace for all humankind, and to respect the rights of conscience and belief.

*All* **While we ourselves are servants in the world as citizens of God's eternal kingdom.**

We affirm our intention to go on praying and working, with all our fellow Christians, for the visible unity of the Church in the way Christ chooses, so that people and nations may be led to love and serve God and praise him more and more for ever.

*All* **Source, Guide, and Goal of all that is: to God be eternal glory. Amen.**

## Affirmations

The congregation is invited to stand as the presiding Minister asks the Lay Preacher to affirm *their* faith:

In the light of this Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church ... N ... is now asked to answer the following questions:

... N ... , do you confess again your faith in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?  
**I do.**

In dependence on God's grace do you reaffirm your trust in Jesus Christ as saviour and Lord and your promise to follow him and to seek to do and to bear his will all the days of your life?  
**I do.**

Do you believe that the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments, discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the supreme authority for the faith and conduct of all God's people?  
**I do.**

Do you accept the office of Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher of the United Reformed Church and do you promise to perform its duties?  
**I do.**

Do you promise as an Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher of the United Reformed Church to seek its wellbeing, unity and peace, to cherish love towards all other churches and to endeavour always so far as you are able to build up the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church?

**By the grace of God I do, and all these things I profess and promise in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

The presiding Minister asks the congregation:

Do you, the members of this local church and the members of ... XY ... Synod receive ... N ... as an Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher and promise them your prayerful support and encouragement in this ministry?

All **We do.**

## Commissioning

Ever gracious God,  
you have brought us into your Church and made us your witnesses,  
giving us the gifts we need to proclaim the gospel of your holy love.  
We give thanks today for ... N ... ,  
whom you have called to be a preacher of your Word,  
and in your name we commission *them* to the office of Lay Preacher.  
Inspire *them* with your Holy Spirit  
so that *they* will be fired with passion and always seek deeper understanding  
of the gospel *they* proclaim.  
Sustain *them* in *their* calling, when it is easy and when it is difficult.  
May *they* find eager hearers who respond to *their* proclamation,  
and give *them* their support and encouragement.  
Keep *them* humble,  
but make *them* aware of what *they* bring to the life and well-being of the Church,  
as, through *their* preaching, the gospel is proclaimed.  
Keep *them* ever hopeful and keep *them* ever joyful.  
Bring them and all of us at the last to full maturity in Christ,  
in whose name we pray.

All **Amen.**

## Declaration

In the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ,  
the only Head of the Church,  
and in accordance with the decision of the Synod,  
and of the General Assembly,  
I declare you to be commissioned to the office  
of *Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher* in the United Reformed Church  
and welcome you into this office.

## Presentation

The certificate and also a Bible or other suitable gift may be presented.

The service concludes with the Lord's Supper, a prayer for this is included on page d1, or with a hymn and blessing.

The following readings are appropriate:

*Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures):* Numbers 11:16-17, Isaiah 40:1-11, Isaiah 52:7-12, Jeremiah 1:4-10, Jeremiah 23:16-22.

*New Testament:* Matthew 9:32-38, Luke 10:1-6, John 15:1-17, Acts 11:19-26, Romans 1:8-17, 2 Timothy 4:1-5, 1 Peter 4:8-14.