

Rededication services

There are times in the lives of individuals and congregations when an act of renewal and rededication is valuable. Some churches do this within an annual service to renew their relationship with ecumenical partners. In joint United Reformed-Methodist congregations the Covenant service in January or September gives an opportunity to start again. Many congregations have a special Sunday each year, which may or may not be called their Anniversary, when they mark a new beginning in their life and re-commit themselves to the work of ministry.

In 1997 the General Assembly acknowledged the importance of these congregational acts by agreeing to ask that local churches should observe the first Sunday in October each year, or another convenient date, such as rededication Sunday.

Two different orders for such a service follow. One is based on the Five Marks of Mission. The other draws on existing material which has

been produced for anniversary and rededication Sundays, and focuses on the theme of unity. Neither of them needs be followed slavishly. They simply offer two models for incorporating these ideas into worship.

Themes of remembering, renewal and rededication have different significance for different local congregations, and are influenced by the hopes and fears which people have for the future of their fellowship. Within the safety and challenge of worship, they can be encouraged to let go of burdens from the past and renew their energy for the unseen future which God holds out to them.

First, there is an order for a congregational renewal of baptismal promises which is based on the Baptismal service in this book. This offers a chance for all present to renew the promises they made at baptism, or the promises which previously were made for them by their parents, when they were young children.