

Ordination and Induction of Ministers of the Word and Sacraments

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 meeting of the synod shall be constituted, at which the Synod Moderator (or a deputy) shall preside representing the synod. (The Structure Section B). The ordination shall normally be held in the pastorate to which the Minister of The Word and Sacraments is being inducted. If desired, the Lord's Supper may be celebrated.

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Welcome and Call to Worship

Including one or more Scripture sentences, in simple or responsive form
(suitable sentences include Ephesians 6:23-24; Revelation 1:4b;
Colossians 1:15-16, 18a-b, 19a)

Hymn or song

Prayers of Approach

Beginning with praise:
either

Sovereign God, you are neither made nor fashioned:
All **you are the Creator and source of life,
perfect Saviour,
Intercessor and giver of spiritual gifts.**

God of all grace, whose love for us is unconditional:
All **you are the Source and Guide and Goal of all that is;
we stand in awe at your majesty and might.**

When we are in your holy presence,
All **our hearts are renewed with adoration, we praise you;
our souls are renewed with lasting peace, we praise you;
our minds are renewed with inspiration, we praise you;
and our strength is renewed with hope, we praise you.**

or

We praise you, God, the Creator:
All **through your love and power all things came to be and continue
in their being.**

We praise you, Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh:
All **through your death and resurrection
we are reconciled within God's family
and born into a new and living hope.**

We praise you, Holy Spirit, the Giver of life:
All **through wind and fire the Church was born,
and by your gifts the body of Christ is built up.**

With the whole Church on earth and in heaven we praise you:
All **one God for ever.
Amen.**

or

For the wonders of creation and the beauty of this earth:
All **Creator God, we praise you.**

For your gift beyond words in Jesus Christ:
All **redeeming God, we praise you.**

For the call to follow and the grace to serve:
All **living God, we praise you.**

Continuing with Confession:
either

Almighty God, we have fractured your Church,
we have wasted the resources of this earth,
we have corrupted our culture.

All **Forgive us, we pray;
renew us by the power of your Spirit
to be loving and honest people of integrity.**

Merciful God, we have committed our hearts to walking with you daily
following the example of leadership and servanthood
which we see in your Son Jesus Christ.

All **But we confess we have elevated our desires and plans
over your will for our lives and your world.**

We chase after authority and power over others,
to serve our own purposes.

All **Forgive us, and open our eyes,
so that we might truly value ourselves and one another
as your handiwork.**

Draw us close and bind us together in your mercy.

or

Let us confess our sin: for our abuse of your creation:

All **Lord, forgive us;**

for our divisions within the one body of Christ:

All **Lord, forgive us;**

for our neglect of the gifts of the Spirit:

All **Lord, forgive us.**

or

Gracious God, you call us to be the body of Christ,
yet we often fail in our vocation.

While Christ proclaimed truth, we obscure it.

Though Christ prayed for the unity of all, we remain divided.

While Christ touched the sick and blessed the poor,
we shrink from the demands of justice.

Forgive us. Conform us to Christ.

May all that we do arise from our unity in him, and may his Spirit renew us,
so that the world might come to believe.

All **Amen.**

Continuing with assurance of forgiveness:

either

The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance:
Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...

1 Timothy 1:15

To all who turn to God, who take hold of the grace that has been revealed,
this is Christ's gracious word:
Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you.

Luke 7:48b, 50b

He also says: Come, follow me.

Luke 18.22b

or

In repentance and in faith hear the promise of grace and the assurance
of pardon:

God resolved through Christ to reconcile to God's self all things,
whether on earth or in heaven,
by making peace through the blood of Christ's cross.

Colossians 1:20

Jesus says: Your sins are forgiven.

Mark 2:5b

He also says:

Feed my lambs. Tend my sheep. Follow me.

John 21:15b, 16b, 19b

Thanks be to God.

All **Amen.**

A prayer for grace may be said, such as:

Sovereign God, your grace shapes us, summons us, strengthens us.

Author of Creation, inscribe your law upon our hearts.

Word-made-flesh, touch our ears and open them to your instruction.

Divine Breath, stir within us with sighs too deep for words.

Take and transform us now:

that we may be your workers and witnesses

in every place to which you draw us.

All **Amen.**

or

God, the source of every perfect gift:

in Jesus Christ you have given us your life to redeem us,

your word for our wisdom,

your grace for our guide.

Enter and possess our hearts, to dwell with us always,

one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

Statement

The presiding Minister says:

We meet today as the ... X ... Synod of the United Reformed Church, in the company of members of ... YZ ... churches (representatives of ...) ... and friends from far and wide. We welcome you all.

Christians share, through their baptism, in the ministry of Christ; and all Christians are called to be ministers of God's love. The life of faithful discipleship is cradled in worship, shaped in study of the Scriptures, and expressed in loving service in the Church and in the world. God gives a variety of gifts, from the same Spirit, to equip the Church for the work of ministry and to build up the body of Christ.

Continuing with either (at an Ordination and Induction):

In succession to the apostles and in company with all who follow in Christ's way, some are called to be Ministers of the Word and Sacraments; and it is to this ministry that we have come to ordain ... N ... , and to induct *them* to serve in ...

or (at an Induction of a previously-ordained Minister of the Word and Sacraments):

In succession to the apostles and in company with all who follow in Christ's way, some are called to be Ministers of the Word and Sacraments; and it is within this ministry that we have come to induct ... N ... to serve in ...

Readings from Scripture

The following readings are appropriate:

Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures):

Exodus 33:12-14; Deuteronomy 30:11-20; 1 Kings 19:1-21; Nehemiah 8:1-12; Isaiah 6:1-8; 49:1-6; 52:7-10; 55:1-13; 61:1-4; Jeremiah 1:4-10.

New Testament:

Matthew 5:1-12; Mark 3:13-19; 6:30-44; 10:35-45; Luke 4:14-21; 10:1-11; John 13:1-17; 15:1-17; 21:15-19. Acts 20:17-38; Romans 10:5-15; 12:1-21; 1 Corinthians 12:4-13; 2 Corinthians 4:1-15; Ephesians 3:8-21; 4:1-16; Philippians 2:1-16; 1 Peter 4:8-11; 5:1-4.

An appropriate response may be used before and/or after each reading, for example:

Let us listen for God's word to us today.

All **May our ears and our hearts be open.**

or

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Hymn or song

Presentation of the Candidate

The Interim Moderator may present the candidate to the presiding Minister with these or similar words:

Moderator, I present to you ... N ... for [ordination and] induction.

At an Ordination with Induction:

... N ... was accepted as a candidate by the United Reformed Church, has been prepared for ordination by ... College, is commended for ordination by ... *their* sending Synod, and, through a process of prayerful discernment, has been called to serve here by decision of ... (church meeting/appointing body) [with the concurrence of ...]

Or, at an Induction of a previously ordained Minister:

... N ... has previously served as a Minister of the Word and Sacraments at ... AB ... , and, through a process of prayerful discernment, has been called to serve here by decision of ... (church meeting/appointing body) [with the concurrence of ...]

Narrative of the Call

One or more representatives of the congregation/s or appointing body makes a short statement outlining the steps which have led to this call.

Statement by the candidate

The candidate makes a brief statement about their call to the particular ministry into which they will be inducted (and, in the case of an Ordinand, about their call to the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments).

Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the URC

(URC Basis of Union, Schedule D)

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

(URC Basis of Union, Schedule C)

Using one of the two prescribed forms, both printed here.

VERSION I

1. ... N ... , do you confess anew your faith in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit?
I do.
2. 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.

3. Do you believe that Jesus Christ, who was born of Mary, lived our common life on earth, died upon the cross, and who was raised from the dead and reigns for evermore, is the gift of God's very self to the world?
Do you believe that through him God's love, justice and mercy are revealed and forgiveness, reconciliation and eternal life are offered to all people?
And will you faithfully proclaim this Gospel?

**By the grace of God this I believe
and this I will proclaim.**

4. Do you believe that the Church is the people gathered by God's love to proclaim the reconciliation of the world to God through Jesus Christ?

I do.

5. Are zeal for the glory of God, love for the Lord Jesus Christ, obedience to the Holy Spirit and a desire for the salvation of the world, so far as you know your own heart, the chief motives which lead you to enter this ministry?

They are.

6. Do you promise to live a holy life, and to maintain the truth of the gospel, whatever trouble or persecution may arise?

Relying on the strength of Christ, I do.

7. Do you promise to fulfil the duties of your charge* faithfully, to lead the church in worship, to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments, to exercise pastoral care and oversight, to take your part in the councils of the Church, and to give leadership to the Church in its mission to the world?

By the grace of God, I do.

* The presiding Minister (after appropriate consultation) may modify the wording of question 7 to fit the kind of ministry to which the candidate has been called.

8. Do you promise
as a Minister of the United Reformed Church
to seek its well-being, purity and peace,
to cherish love towards all other churches
and to endeavour always to build up
the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church?
By the grace of God, I do.
9. Will you undertake to exercise your ministry
in accordance with the Statement concerning
the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church?
**I will, and all these things I profess and promise
in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

or

VERSION II

1. ... N ... , will you confess anew your faith?

**I confess anew my faith in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

**I 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 believe that Jesus Christ, who was born of Mary,
lived our common life on earth, died upon the cross,
and who was raised from the dead and reigns for evermore,
is the gift of God's very self to the world.**

**I believe that through him
God's love, justice and mercy are revealed
and forgiveness, reconciliation and eternal life
are offered to all people.**

**And by the grace of God
I promise to proclaim this gospel faithfully.
I believe that the Church is the people gathered by God's love
to proclaim the reconciliation of the world to God through
Jesus Christ.**

2. What leads you to this ministry?

**So far as I know my own heart,
I believe that zeal for the glory of God,
love for the Lord Jesus Christ,
obedience to the Holy Spirit
and a desire for the salvation of the world,
are the chief motives which lead me to enter this ministry.
Relying on the strength of Christ,
I promise to live a holy life,
and to maintain the truth of the gospel,
whatever trouble or persecution may arise.**

3. Will you faithfully fulfil the duties of your charge? *

**By the grace of God
I promise to lead the Church in worship,
to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments,
to exercise pastoral care and oversight,
to take my part in the councils of the Church,
and to give leadership to the Church in mission to the world.**

**As a Minister of the United Reformed Church
I promise to seek its well-being, purity, and peace,
to cherish love towards all other churches,
and to endeavour always to build up
the one holy, catholic and apostolic Church.**

**I undertake to exercise my ministry
in accordance with the Statement concerning the Nature,
Faith and Order
of the United Reformed Church.
All these things I profess and promise in the power of the
Holy Spirit.**

* The presiding Minister (after appropriate consultation) may modify the wording of the answer to question 3 to fit the kind of ministry to which the candidate has been called.

Hymn of the Holy Spirit

One possible hymn of the Holy Spirit is offered on page a1.

(NOTE: At an Induction of a previously-ordained Minister of the Word and Sacraments, this hymn is instead used later in the service, after the congregational promises.)

Ordination Prayer

(NOTE: At an Induction of a previously ordained Minister of the Word and Sacraments, this section is *omitted*.)

It is the custom of the United Reformed Church to lay hands on those who are ordained which signifies the invocation of the Holy Spirit that the person is equipped for their new ministry. The Ordinand may kneel, the congregation may stand, and the presiding Minister prays:

God of every perfect gift,
we give you thanks that in every age you call your people
to show forth your acts of mercy and love.
We thank you for the many ways your summons comes to us;
we thank you that as you call, so you equip;
we thank you that, together, we and all your Church
are brought to share in the ministry of Christ.

Thank you now, sovereign God, for ... N ... ,
as in your name, and trusting it to be your will,
we now ordain *them* as a Minister of the Word and Sacraments.

The presiding Minister and those appointed lay hands on the Ordinand

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon your servant ... N ... ;
that your gift within *them* may be fanned into a flame.
Strengthen *them* in *their* work and witness;
sustain *them* with calmness and confidence, with excitement and joy.
In every circumstance, whether in times of ease or in times of difficulty,
enable *them* to stand firm in the truth of the gospel,
and to conduct *themselves* always according to your holy will.
In *their* preaching, may your Gospel of redemption be heard;
in *their* presiding at baptistery, font and table, may your saving deeds
be remembered;
and may all *their* acts of service bear witness to your steadfast love.
So may ... N ... 's ministry enrich the whole Church;
and may ... N ... , with all your Church, know the assurance now and always
of your presence, your purpose, your power.

All **Amen.**

Promises

The presiding Minister asks the congregation:

either

Do you confess again your faith in one God, the Trinity of love – whose children we are, co-heirs with Christ, crowned with the Holy Spirit?

All **We do.**

or

Do you confess again your faith in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

All **We do.**

Continuing:

Do you receive ... N ... as from God, as a Minister of The Word and Sacraments of the United Reformed Church?

All **We do.**

Will you pray for ... N ... in this ministry, giving *them* due honour, support and encouragement?

All **We will.**

Continuing with a question addressed to those in particular who will receive the candidate's ministry; either, to members of the local church(es) where the Minister of The Word and Sacraments is to serve:

Members of ... , do you receive ... N ... as from God, to serve among you and to lead you in your ministry?

All **We do.**

or (in the case of induction to eg a chaplaincy, an ecumenical appointment, a synod post, or a General Assembly appointment) to members or representatives of the appointing body:

Members of, do you receive ... N ... as from God, to minister among you?

All **We do.**

According to circumstances, the presiding Minister may also invite representatives of other bodies, including for example ecumenical colleagues and/or members of an appropriate area/grouping within the synod, to make a similar promise using suitable words.

Hymn of the Holy Spirit

One possible hymn of the Holy Spirit is offered on page a1.

(NOTE: At an Ordination and Induction, this hymn is instead used earlier in the service, after the Ordinand's affirmations.)

Induction Prayer

The presiding Minister prays:

Eternal God, you have called and gathered us, with all your Church,
to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed;
and, in your Holy Spirit, we receive all the gifts we need.
We give thanks, today, because you have called and set apart ... N ...
to be a Minister of The Word and Sacraments in this place [*or, in this pastorate*].

As we receive and induct *them* in the name of Jesus Christ to serve you here,
strengthen and encourage *them*, we pray,
that the ministry and mission of your people may bear fruit.
Inspire *them* in leading worship,
in preaching and teaching and service;
may the Gospel be celebrated when *they* preside at the sacraments.
Nurture *them* with love and humility
to tend your flock, to feed the hungry, heal the wounded, and find the lost.
Bless *them* with power and patience,
to witness with all Christians to your way,
and labour with all people of goodwill for justice and mercy in society.

Give *them* joy in *their* ministry,
and the fulfilment of being rooted in your will.
Watch over *them* in times of trial; in weariness, disappointment, or frustration;
and keep *them* from complacency and spiritual pride.
Fill *their* home with your peace.

(Special petitions may be added at this point)

Give grace to the people of this church [*or, this pastorate; or other suitable description*],
that they may accept the service God offers them through ... N
May they work together in unity and joy for the glory of your name.
And may the good work you have begun today
be brought to completion in Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you, God who brought us to birth,
and with the Holy Spirit, the Breath of life:
one eternal Trinity of love, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

Declaration of [Ordination and] Induction

The presiding minister says:

In the name of Jesus Christ, the only Head of the Church,
and representing the ... X ... Synod of the United Reformed Church,
I declare ... N ...

[to be ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments
within the one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and]
to be inducted to...

Continuing with a Scripture sentence, such as:

Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. Fight
the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were
called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many
witnesses.

1 Timothy 6:11b-12

All **Amen.**

or

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness
be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything,
but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your
requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all
understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:4-7

All **Amen.**

or

May the God of peace, who by the blood of the eternal covenant brought out
from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, equip you
fully in all that is good so that you may do God's will, working among us that
which is well-pleasing to God, through Jesus Christ to whom be the glory for
ever and ever.

Hebrews 13:20-21

All **Amen.**

or

Now to the One who can bring about, by the power at work within us, that
which far surpasses all we can ask or imagine – to God be glory in the Church
and in Christ Jesus to all generations, now and forever!

Ephesians 3:20-21

All **Amen.**

Welcome

The newly inducted Minister of The Word and Sacraments is greeted by the presiding Minister and by others duly appointed, who may include representatives of the pastorate or appointing body, and of such local grouping or area of URCs as may exist within the synod, as well as by ecumenical, civic and community representatives.

Giving of Gifts

The Minister of The Word and Sacraments may be presented with symbolic gifts, and appropriate words may be used; for example:

Receive this Bible,
All **the word of God, living and active.**

Hebrews 4:12a

Receive this cup and plate,
All **to hold bread and wine for the feeding of God's people.**

Receive this water,
All **symbol of baptism and sign of new life.**

Prayers of Intercession

These prayers may be spoken by different voices and may end with the Lord's Prayer.

Hymn or song

Dismissal and Blessing

Either

Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.
Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.
Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.
Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.
[Live in harmony with one another;
do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly;
do not claim to be wiser than you are.
Do not repay anyone evil for evil,
but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all.
If it is possible, so far as it depends on you,
live peaceably with all.]

Romans 12:12-15 [-18]

or

Go into the world: dance, laugh, sing and create.

All **With the assurance of God's blessing, we go.**

Go into the world: risk, explore, discover, and love.

All **With the assurance of God's blessing, we go.**

Go into the world: believe, hope, struggle and remember.

All **With the assurance of God's blessing, we go.**

Go forth remembering who you are and to whom you belong.

All **Thanks be to God!**

Amen.

or

Now to the One who is able to keep you from falling,
and to make you stand without blemish
in the presence of divine glory with rejoicing,
to the only God our Saviour,
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
be glory, majesty, power and authority,
before all time, now and for ever.

Jude:24-25

All **Amen.**

or

Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted;
support the weak;
help the afflicted;
honour everyone;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Continuing with:

(And) The blessing of God Almighty,
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer
[or, Author of all, and living Word, and Voice of love within]
[or, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,]
be with you always.

All **Amen.**