

Commissioning and Induction of Church Related Community Workers

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 Commissioning shall normally be held in the church-in-community where the Church Related Community Worker is to serve. It should be adapted to local circumstances, with opportunities for participation by those who will work with the Church Related Community Worker. If desired, the Lord's Supper may be celebrated after the prayers of intercession.

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Welcome and Call to Worship

including one or more Scripture sentences, in simple or responsive form
(suitable sentences include Psalm 95:1-2; Psalm 100:5; Isaiah 65:19,23a,24;
Jeremiah 29:7; Zechariah 8:3a,4a,5; Revelation 21:2a,3).

Hymn or song

Prayers of Approach

Beginning with praise:

Loving God,
whose love we live to serve,
so that all the world may see the wonder of it:
take hold of us again as we worship here,
and give us the mind of Christ,
so that we may rediscover your presence in the community around us,
and recognise your Spirit at work in every act of human kindness,
in every plea for justice,
in every call to service,
and in every challenge to our complacency.
Take hold of us again,
fill us with love for each other and our neighbours,
and by our faithfulness,
let your justice, joy and peace extend to more and more,
so that the thanks and praise we offer now
may increase, to your glory and our delight,
now and for evermore.

All **Amen.**

Continuing with Confession:

Faithful God,
you called your Church into being
to proclaim your integrity to the world,
and to live in the truth of it.

All **Forgive our faithlessness,
and make our witness true.**

Loving God,
you called your Church into being
to assure the world of your unfailing love
and to live in the power of it.

All **Forgive our lovelessness,
and give us grace to love our neighbours
as you, in Christ, have loved us.**

God of justice,
you called your Church into being
to serve your cause,
and to challenge prejudice and oppression.

All **Forgive our prejudice,
and our hardness of heart;
fill us with compassion and make us merciful.**

God of peace,
you called your Church into being
to teach the world the things that make for peace.

All **Forgive our enmity and bitterness,
make us truly your children,
faithful in our bearing of your image,
and courageous in our peacemaking.**

Continuing with assurance of forgiveness:

The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance:

All **that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.
Thanks be to God who gives us the victory
through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

Statement

The presiding Minister says:

We meet today as the ... X ... Synod of the United Reformed Church, with the members of ... Church-in-Community, representatives of ... and other friends.

All Christians are called to the duty and delight of continuing the ministry of Christ in the Church and for the world. Within this shared ministry, some are called in particular to the Ministry of Church Related Community Work: to pray and care for the community, to challenge both the community and the Church alike, to enable the proclamation in word and deed of God's love and mercy, and to help the Church to work with others for peace and justice.

Continuing with either (at a Commissioning and Induction):

It is to this ministry that we have come to commission ... N ... , and to induct them to serve here.

or (at an induction of a previously commissioned CRCW):

It is within this ministry that we have come to induct ... N ... to serve here.

Readings from Scripture

The following readings are appropriate:

Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures):

Deuteronomy 15:1-11; Psalm 15; Isaiah 58:1-12; Jeremiah 31:7-14;
Zechariah 8:1-8.

New Testament:

Matthew 5:1-16; Matthew 7:7-20; Matthew 19:16-30; Mark 4:21-32;
Luke 1:46-55; Luke 4:14-21; Luke 6:20-31; Luke 14:7-14;
John 4:5-15,21-30,39-42; Philipians 2:1-11; Revelation 21:1-7.

Sermon

Hymn or song

Presentation of the Candidate

An appropriate person may present the candidate to the presiding Minister with these or similar words:

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

At a Commissioning with Induction:

... N ... was accepted by the United Reformed Church as a candidate for this ministry,
has been prepared for commissioning by Northern College,
is commended for commissioning by ... *their* sending Synod,
and, through a process of prayerful discernment,
has been called to serve here by decision of ... CRCW Covenant partners
[with the concurrence of ...]

Or, at an Induction of a previously commissioned CRCW:

... N ... previously served as a Church Related Community Worker in ... AB ... ,
and, through a process of prayerful discernment,
has been called to serve here by decision of ... CRCW Covenant partners
[with the concurrence of ...]

Statement by the Church-in-Community

A brief statement from one or more representatives outlining the steps which have led to this call. In the case of an ecumenical appointment this statement should include contributions from ecumenical partners.

Statement by the Candidate

The candidate makes a brief statement about *their* call to this particular ministry. In the case of a first commissioning, this should include *their* call to the Ministry of Church Related Community Work.

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 F part I)

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

VERSION I

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

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 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.**

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.

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.

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.

Do you promise to care for, to challenge and to pray for the community,
to discern with others God's will for the well-being of the community?
Do you promise to take your part in the councils of the Church
and to enable the church to live out its calling
to proclaim the love and mercy of God
through working with others in both church and community
for peace and justice in the world?

By the grace of God, I do.

Do you promise
as a Church Related Community Worker 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.

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

... 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.**

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.**

Will you faithfully fulfil the duties of your charge?

**By the grace of God I promise
to care for, to challenge and to pray for the community,
to discern with others God's will for the well-being of the community.
I promise to take my part in the councils of the Church
and to endeavour to enable the church to live out its calling
to proclaim the love and mercy of God
through working with others in both church and community
for peace and justice in the world.
As a Church Related Community Worker
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.**

Hymn of the Holy Spirit

(NOTE: At an Induction of a previously commissioned CRCW, this hymn is instead used later in the service, after the congregational Promises.)

A possible hymn of the Holy Spirit is included on page AA1.

Commissioning Prayer

(NOTE: At an Induction of a previously commissioned CRCW, this section is omitted.)

The presiding Minister prays:

God of every perfect gift,
We give you thanks that in every generation you call your people
to proclaim and to demonstrate your 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 you draw us to share in community together.

Thank you now for ... N ... ,
as in your name, and trusting it to be your will,
we now commission *them* as a Church Related Community Worker.

Strengthen and encourage *them* with the assurance
of your Holy Spirit's constant presence,
so that *they* may undertake this task and all its responsibilities
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.
So may ... N ... 's ministry enrich the whole Church
and be a blessing to every community.

All **Amen.**

Promises

The presiding Minister asks members of the church-in-community and
representatives of the synod to respond to the following questions:

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 Church Related Community Worker of the United Reformed Church,
to serve among you here and with you in the world?

All **We do.**

Do you promise to pray for each other and for ... N ... ;
and do you promise to share with *them*
in seeking and doing the will of God,
to give *them* encouragement, consideration and support,
so that you grow together in faith, hope and love?

All **We do.**

According to circumstances, the presiding Minister may also invite representatives of other bodies to make a similar promise using suitable words.

Hymn of the Holy Spirit

(NOTE: At a Commissioning and Induction, this hymn is instead used earlier in the service, after the candidate's Affirmations.)

A possible hymn of the Holy Spirit is included on page AA1.

Induction Prayer

The presiding Minister prays:

Eternal God, you have called us into the Church
to proclaim the Gospel and make it effective in the world;
and, in your Holy Spirit, we receive all the gifts we need.
We give thanks, today, because you have given ... N ...
the necessary gifts to challenge and encourage us
in our work within the community where we live.
As we receive and induct *them* in the name of Jesus Christ to serve you here,
strengthen and encourage *them*
with the assurance of your presence, your purpose, and your power.
Energise *them* in *their* tasks of caring, of challenge, and of prayer;
bless *them* with resilience, imagination, and hope
in the discerning of your will for this community's well-being.
Here, and in the councils of the Church,
and in every place where community is found,
let doors and hearts be opened, through *their* influence, to your mercy and love.
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 pride.
Fill *their* home with your peace.

(Special petitions may be added at this point)

Give to *them*, and to all of us,
ever-deeper understanding of your ways in the world;
keep *them*, and all of us,
compassionate and courageous in engaging with other people,
reflecting and revealing the essential dignity of every life in your sight,
and labouring with all people of goodwill for justice and peace in society.
Through ... N ... 's ministry here
may all of us be more and more challenged and inspired to respond to human
need;
that our work and prayer might help all to find their voice
and the strength to build a better community, at one with itself,
in the peace and joy of God, made known in Jesus Christ.

All **Amen.**

Declaration of [Commissioning 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 [commissioned and] inducted
to the Ministry of Church Related Community Work
with ... Church-in-Community.

Signing of the CRCW Covenant

Copies of the Church Related Community Work Covenant are signed by the
Church Related Community Worker and representatives of the Church-in-
Community, the CRCW programme sub-committee, and the synod.

Welcome

The newly inducted CRCW is greeted by the presiding Minister and by others
duly appointed, who may include representatives of the Church-in-Community,
and of such local grouping or area of churches as may exist within the synod,
as well as by ecumenical, civic and community representatives.

Giving of gifts

The Church Related Community Worker may be presented with gifts.

Prayers of Intercession

These may be offered by someone from the Church-in-Community and end with
the Lord's Prayer (if not used earlier).

Prayer of Commitment

Help us, God, to trust you
and to find your purpose in everything that happens to us.
Be there with us in every experience,
speak to us through other people,
and give us what it takes to express your love for the world
in all our words and works.
Take us where you want us to go,
renewing our faith and hope, forgiving our sin,
perfecting our praise, and filling us with confidence,
so that your name may be glorified in us
as it has been already and will be for ever
in Jesus Christ, our Saviour and our Friend.

All **Amen.**

Hymn or Song

Dismissal and Blessing

Go to the world again in confidence;
play your part in God's creation and never lose heart.
Put your faith in the risen Christ,
who will match his stride to yours until your journey's end.
And the blessing of the Eternal God,
Creator, Liberator, and Sustainer,
[or, Author of all, and living Word, and Voice of love within]
[or, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,]
be with you all.

All **Amen.**