

Commissioning of Locally Recognised Worship Leaders

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 unaltered and these are indicated by the orange boxes.**

Locally Recognised Worship Leaders are commissioned, by the synod, to lead worship in their local church or pastorate. A commissioning service is conducted by the synod after completion of an approved course of study. The service may be led by the minister of the congregation/pastorate where the Worship Leader is to undertake their ministry, or by a representative of the synod. 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 a Locally
Recognised Worship Leader,
who has been commended by the ... X ... Synod
to lead God's people in worship within this
congregation/pastorate.

Statement by the Locally Recognised Worship Leader

The Worship Leader 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 Locally Recognised Worship Leader of the ... X ... Synod and do you promise to perform its duties faithfully?

I do.

Do you promise as an Locally Recognised Worship Leader of the United Reformed Church to seek its well-being, 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/pastorate receive ... N ... as a Worship Leader and promise *them* your prayerful support and encouragement in this ministry?

All **We do.**

Commissioning

O Most High,
in worship our restless hearts find their rest in You.

All **May we find meaning in the music of Your praise.**

O Risen Saviour,
in worship you proclaimed good news for the poor,
freedom for prisoners, sight for the blind, and liberation
for the oppressed;

All **may we find strength to follow and proclaim your message.**

Most Holy Spirit,
in worship you speak to and empower us,
filling us with grace at pulpit and table,
in silence and song, in laughter and listening;

All **may we find strength to live as committed disciples.**

We give thanks today for ... N ... ,
whom you have called to lead Your people in worship,
and in your name we commission *them*
to be a Locally Recognised Worship Leader to minister in
this congregation/pastorate.

Inspire *them* with your Holy Spirit
so that *they* will be fired with passion
and always seek deeper understanding of the worship
they lead.

Sustain *them* in *their* calling, when it is easy and when it
is difficult.

Keep *them* humble, but make *them* aware of what *they* bring
to the life and well-being of the Church, as,
through *their* leading of worship Your people are strengthened.
Keep *them* ever hopeful and ever joyful.

All **Bring ... N ... and all of us at the last
to full maturity in Christ, in whose name we pray.
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,
I declare you to be commissioned to the office
of Locally Recognised Worship Leader in this church/pastorate
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 DD1, or with a hymn and blessing.

The following readings are appropriate:

Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures:

Numbers 11:16-17, Psalm 150 (for musicians), 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, Luke 18: 1-7 (persistence in prayer), John 15:1-17, Acts 11:19-26, Romans 1:8-17, Colossians 3:14-17 (psalms, hymns and songs – but also teaching and thankfulness), 2 Timothy 4:1-5, 1 Peter 4:8-14.

URC Worship Additional Resources to complement this book can be found online, along with this Worship Book, as A4 downloadable versions in PDF and Word format for printing: www.urch.org.uk/worship-book