

APPENDIX J

ORDER FOR COMMISSIONING TO THE ORDER OF LAY MINISTRIES

The Order of Lay Ministries includes in it a variety of particular offices such as Lay Preacher, Pastoral Visitor, Pastoral Administrator, Youth Pastor, Youth Leader, Worship Leader, Choir Director, and Association Office Bearers.

A member of the Church is received into a particular office in the Order of Lay Ministries in consultation with the Administrator of the Order of Lay Ministries and on the authority of Presbytery and is commissioned either at a service of worship in his/her church or at a special Presbytery service. (See the Manual of Faith and Order, chap. 16, section 12.)

A Lay Preacher, for instance, may be commissioned at Presbytery to make him/her more widely known than just in his/her own congregation.

Family and friends are invited.

The reading of the Vow must be properly prepared.

In a local service the Order for Commissioning follows the Offertory after the Sermon in the Order before Baptism or Holy Communion.

The sermon should focus at least in part on the particular ministry, or ministries, to which the candidate is, or the candidates are, being commissioned.

If more than one person is commissioned in the service, plural forms are substituted as necessary, but each candidate is commissioned separately to his/her own particular ministry.

If Holy Communion is celebrated, it follows the commissioning.

For suitable lections in commissioning a Lay Preacher see those listed in the Order for a Minister's Ordination and Induction.

Some possible lections for other offices are:

Num. 11:16f., 24-30;

Ac. 11:19-26; Rom. 12:1-13; I Cor. 1:26-2:5; 12:1-11/12; 12:14-26; 12:27-13:7; Eph. 4:1-16;

Matt. 9:35-10:15; 28:16-20; Lk. 10:1-20; Jn. 15:1-16.

Statement of Intent

The Minister/Moderator stands behind the Holy Table, facing the congregation and reads the Statement:

All Christians by their baptism are called to share in

the ministry of Christ to his people and his mission to the world.

In his name we are now to commission our brother/sister [full name] within this calling

to be a member of the Order of Lay Ministries

in the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

and to ask God to bless him/her in this work.

The Narrative

The Session/Presbytery Clerk reads the narrative:

[Name] offered him/herself as a candidate

for the Order of Lay Ministries

and has been examined and trained under a committee

appointed to discern and report on his/her fitness for the Order.

At a meeting of Presbytery on [date] the committee recommended,

and Presbytery approved, that [name] be admitted to the office

of [the particular office] in the Order of Lay Ministries.

Presbytery directed that an Edict be read at all services of public

worship in [name's] church for two successive Sundays calling for

any objections to his/her doctrine, character or conduct

to be lodged with its Session Clerk within two weeks of the second Sunday.

[If the scope of the candidate's ministry is to be wider than the local congregation,

for instance with a lay preacher, the following is added:

Objections were also called for at the meeting of the Presbytery on]

No objection was offered.

All this having been done according to the Church's law and usage,

we now proceed to commission [name] as a member of the Order.

The Minister/Moderator invites the candidate to stand in front, facing him/her.

Vow

The Minister/Moderator takes in hand a copy of the Vow and says to the candidate:

Brother/Sister[*name*], so that we may commission you to the Order,
the Church requires you to take this Vow
in the presence of this congregation/of Presbytery.

The Minister hands the Vow to the candidate, who faces the congregation/Presbytery and reads aloud:

**I, [*full name*], own and confess God as my Father,
Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord,
and the Holy Spirit as my Helper.
As far as I know my own heart,
I am moved to enter this ministry
by zeal for the glory of God,
love for the Lord Jesus Christ
and the call of the Holy Spirit.
I accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments
as the uniquely authoritative and sufficient witness to Jesus Christ
and in that sense the Word of God for faith and life.
I accept the Creeds and Confessions
of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa
in the way that the Declaration of Standards sets out.
I affirm the doctrine and form of government of the UPCSA
to accord with Scripture.
I promise to be loyal to this denomination as part of God's Church,
to abide by its laws and discipline
and to seek its unity and peace.
With God's help I commit myself
to study the Scriptures faithfully,
to give myself to daily prayer,
to live a holy life,
to seek to develop the gifts and skills I need for this ministry
and to carry it out with all due diligence and humility.**

Alternatively, especially if more than one candidate is involved, the Minister puts the following questions to the candidate(s) and he/she/they answer individually as indicated. They may say the responses either separately or together, but "I do" should not be changed to "We do."

Do you, [*full names*], own and confess God as your Father,
Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord,
and the Holy Spirit as your Helper?

I do so own and confess.

As far as you know your own heart,
are you moved to enter this ministry
by zeal for the glory of God,
love for the Lord Jesus Christ
and the call of the Holy Spirit?

I am so moved.

Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments
as the uniquely authoritative and sufficient witness to Jesus Christ
and in that sense the Word of God for faith and life;
and do you accept the Creeds and Confessions
of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa
in the way that the Declaration of Standards sets out
and affirm its doctrine and form of government
to accord with Scripture?

I do so accept and affirm.

Do you promise to be loyal to this denomination
as part of God's Church,
to abide by its laws and discipline
and to seek its unity and peace?

I do so promise.

Do you commit yourself to study the Scriptures faithfully,
to give yourself to daily prayer, to live a holy life,
to seek to develop the gifts and skills you need for this ministry
and to carry it out with all due diligence and humility?

I do so commit myself, with God's help.

The candidate signs the Vow on the Table and returns it to the Moderator/Minister.

If the service is in the face of the local congregation, the Minister says:

Will you, the members of [name] Church, welcome and support [name]
as a member of the Order of Lay Ministries?
If so, please stand.

Pause

Will all others present please stand.

If the service is at Presbytery, the Moderator asks all to stand.

Prayer

The candidate faces the front and kneels.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, we thank you
that you have commissioned your Church
to witness to your gospel in the world
and that in every generation
you call men and women from different walks of life
to different ministries for building up the body of Christ.
We thank you that you have called ... [name] to this ministry.
Without your help we have nothing to offer,
and you alone can equip us for the tasks to which you call us;
so hear now the prayers of your people for your servant
as, in humility and silence, he/she confesses his/her need of you.

Pause for silent reflection and prayer.

Graciously assure him/her that you forgive and accept him/her
and renew him/her in the power of your Spirit.
May he/she know your hand upon him/her
as you commission him/her to this service.
Equip him/her for his/her work and witness;
make him/her faithful and diligent;
and use him/her to nurture and build up your people.

Help every one of us, we pray,
to be faithful witnesses to you in the world,
each in the way you call us,
so that more and more people may come to know
your power to save and liberate in Jesus Christ our Lord.
In his name we pray.

Amen.

Admission and Commissioning

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Head of the Church,
and by the authority of this Presbytery,
I now solemnly admit you, ... [name], to the Order of Lay Ministries
and commission you to exercise your gifts as a

May the God of peace,
who through the blood of the eternal covenant
brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus,
that great Shepherd of the sheep,
equip you with everything good for doing his will
and work in you what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ,
to whom be glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Heb. 13:20f. NIV

Right Hand of Fellowship

The congregation sits.

The Minister/Moderator offers his right hand to the candidate, saying:

To signify our common calling to serve the Lord Jesus Christ
I give you the right hand of fellowship in his name.

Hymn

An appropriate hymn is sung.

*If the service is in a congregation, it continues with Holy Communion
or concludes with the Commission and Benediction.*

If it is at Presbytery, Presbytery proceeds with its meeting,

and the Moderator pronounces the Commission and Benediction at its end.

Commissioning of the Congregation

Jesus said,
All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations,
baptizing them in the name
of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.
And remember, I am with you always,
to the end of the age. *Matt.28:18-20*

Or

Jesus said:
You did not choose me, but I chose you
to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. *Jn.15:16*

Or

Jesus said:
Peace be with you!
As the Father has sent me, I send you. *Jn.20:21*

In the power of the Spirit, go into the world.
Serve the Lord and witness to him.

We go in the name of Christ.

Benediction

The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;
the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. *Num.6:24-26*

Exit

If the Bible is carried out through the main entrance, the new member of the Order and the Minister following it to the entrance.