



Commissioning (with Installation at Commissioning)

Approved for use by Church Council after June 1, 2009

Because all of its baptized members share in Christ's ministry of love and service, the church equips and supports them for their ministries in the world. Within this context of ministry, the church calls some of its baptized members for specific ministries.

Associates in ministry are lay persons whose ministries within the church entail a major occupational commitment. Their ministries are diverse, including teaching, youth work, mission and outreach, musical leadership, administration, health care, counseling, and other fields of service. In the Commissioning service, those who have accepted the church's call are commissioned and sent into these ministries.

Commissioning of Associates in Ministry is properly set within the service of Holy Communion, following the sermon and the hymn of the day. If used, the Nicene Creed or the Apostles' Creed may precede the commissioning rite.

The bishop of the synod in which candidate/s have accepted calls normally presides at the commissioning of the candidate/s.

Presentation

The assembly stands. Candidate/s for commissioning gather with presenters and participating ministers before the assembly.

Each candidate for commissioning is presented to the presiding minister and to the assembly.

I present for commissioning as an associate in ministry full name,
who has been prepared, examined, and approved for this ministry
and who has been called by the church to this ministry through name of calling body.

Thanks be to God.

The presenter/s move aside, and the assembly is seated.

Address and Questions

The presiding minister addresses the candidate/s.

All baptized Christians are called to share
in Christ's ministry of love and service in the world,
to the glory of God and for the sake of the human family and the whole creation.
You have been called as *an associate* in ministry
to serve, support, and nurture the people of God in their faith and witness.
You are now to be entrusted with this ministry by the laying on of hands and by prayer.

One or more of the following scripture passages are addressed to the candidate/s.

A reading from Matthew: Jesus said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into the harvest." (Matthew 9:37-38)

A reading from Romans: As in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness. (Romans 12:4-8)

A reading from First Peter: Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of us has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 4:9-11)

The presiding minister questions the candidate/s.

Before almighty God, to whom you must give account,
and in the presence of this assembly, I ask:

Will you accept this ministry, believing that you are called by God
to faithful service as *an associate* in ministry?

Each candidate responds: I will, and I ask God to help me.

The church in which you are to be commissioned
confesses that the Holy Scriptures are the word of God and are the norm of its faith and life.
We accept, teach, and confess the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds.
We also acknowledge the Lutheran Confessions
as true witnesses and faithful expositions of the Holy Scriptures.
Will you therefore serve in accordance with the Holy Scriptures
and these creeds and confessions?

Each candidate responds: I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you be diligent in your study of the Holy Scriptures
and faithful in your use of the means of grace?

Each candidate responds: I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you witness to Jesus Christ in word and deed,
pray for God's people,
and by your own example encourage them in faithful service and holy living?

Each candidate responds: I will, and I ask God to help me.

Almighty God, who has given you the will to do these things,
graciously give you the strength and compassion to perform them.

The assembly responds: Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

The assembly stands for the prayers of intercession.

The prayers are prepared locally for the occasion. The following prayers may serve as a model.

An assisting minister invites the assembly into prayer with these or similar words.

With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus,
let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

For the holy catholic church,
that, filled with your love,
it may hunger for truth and thirst after righteousness:
God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

For all members of the church,
that they may serve you in true and godly lives:
God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

For *name/s*, called to be *an associate* in ministry in the church,
that, sustained by your Holy Spirit,
she/he/they may carry out this ministry with joy and a spirit of bold trust,
serve your people, build up your church, and glorify your name:
God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

For all associates in ministry;
for all pastors, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers;
for *name/s*, our *bishop/s*;
that, together with all those responsible for the care and nurture of your people
they may support one another in serving Christ:
God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

For the mission of the church,
that in faithful witness it may proclaim the gospel
and in humble love serve all in need:
God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

For the nations of the world and their leaders,
that they may work for justice
and promote the dignity and freedom of every person:
God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

For the whole creation,
that everything you have made may fulfill your purpose
and that we may exercise care for your diverse gifts:
God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

For the poor, the persecuted, the sick, the lonely, the forgotten, and all who suffer;
for refugees, prisoners, and all who are in danger;
that they may be relieved and protected:
God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

Other intercessions may be included.

For the glorious company of all the saints,
those who have died in faith and those who live in certain hope,
we praise you.
That their witness may give us courage until the day of Jesus Christ:
God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

The presiding minister concludes the prayers with these or similar words.

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray,
trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen.

Commissioning

The candidate/s may kneel. The presiding minister lays both hands on the head of each candidate.

Following a time of silent prayer, the presiding minister continues, praying for each candidate in turn.

Eternal God, through your Son, Jesus Christ,
pour out your Holy Spirit upon *name*.
Guide, bless, and keep *her/him* in *her/his* serving,
that *she/he* may faithfully carry out the ministry entrusted to *her/him*.
Let *her/his* life and vocation so reflect your grace
that many may come to know you and love you
through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

The candidate/s stand.

A symbol of commissioned ministry may be given to each candidate.

Blessing

The presiding minister addresses the candidate/s.

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you complete in everything good so that you may do God's will, working in you that which is pleasing in God's sight; through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever.

Amen.

Acclamation by the Assembly

The ministers and the candidate/s face the assembly. The presiding minister addresses the assembly.

Will you, assembled as the people of God, receive name/s as a commissioned *associate* in ministry, sent by God to serve all people in Christ's name?

We will, and we ask God to help us.

Will you pray for *her/him/them*, help and honor *her/him/them* for *her/his/their* work's sake, and in all things strive to live together in the peace and unity of Christ?

We will, and we ask God to help us.

The presiding minister presents each of the newly commissioned to the assembly.

Let it be acclaimed that name is commissioned an associate in ministry, called to serve among God's people as together we bear God's creative and redeeming love to all the world.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

After all the newly commissioned have been presented, the assembly may offer acclamation with applause.

Peace

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other in the peace of the risen Christ.

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace, and may say Peace be with you or similar words.

All return to their places. The assembly is seated.

The service continues with the offering.

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

When scheduling a commissioning service, the rhythms and emphases of the church year should be taken into account. For example, because of their solemn character, the days from the Sunday of the Passion through Easter Day are best avoided as days for such a service.

Other days on the church's calendar lend themselves well to the commissioning of associates in ministry. Commemorations such as the following may be suitable: January 27 (Lydia, Dorcas, and Phoebe), January 28 (Thomas Aquinas), April 6 (Albrecht Dürer, Matthias Grünewald, Lucas Cranach), April 23 (Toyohiko Kagawa), May 24 (Nicolaus Copernicus, Leonhard Euler), June 11 (Barnabas), July 28 (Johann Sebastian Bach, Heinrich Schütz, George Frederick Handel), August 13 (Florence Nightingale, Clara Maass), September 17 (Hildegard of Bingen), October 4 (Francis of Assisi), October 26 (Philipp Nicolai, Johann Heermann, Paul Gerhardt), November 3 (Martín de Porres), December 4 (John of Damascus).

The service of commissioning may appropriately take place in a congregation, or at a synod assembly, or in another setting where an assembly may gather, as deemed appropriate by the bishop.

The bishop of the synod in which candidate/s have accepted calls normally presides at the commissioning of the candidate/s. If unable to be present, the bishop authorizes another bishop or ordained minister of this church to preside. It is desirable that one person preside during the entire service. If the service takes place in a congregation, circumstances may suggest that the congregation's pastor preside at the meal of holy communion.

As a sign of the community of associates in ministry, effort should be made to include other commissioned ministers in leadership roles within the service. Assisting minister roles in the liturgy are the most appropriate place to do this.

The complete name of the candidate/s is used at the presentation and again at the acclamation. At other places in the service, the first or given name/s (without surname/s) is appropriate.

Preparation

The candidate/s is appropriately vested in an alb, a symbol of being clothed with Christ in baptism. Or, a candidate may wear the dress associated with her/his area of specialized service; for example, a church musician might be vested in an alb or a cassock and surplice in which she/he will usually exercise that ministry. Until presented, the candidate/s may be seated with the congregation.

During the service, the candidate/s may kneel during the thanksgiving. Appropriate accommodations may be provided. When there is more than one candidate, it may be preferable to provide one centrally located place for kneeling. After each candidate receives the laying on of hands, she/he moves aside and the next candidate kneels at the same place.

Presentation

At the close of the hymn of the day, the candidate/s and presenter/s come to a place in front of the presiding minister.

The presenter is chosen from among those who exercise leadership in the training or candidacy process. When there are several candidates, each candidate may have a presenter. At a synod assembly, the secretary of the synod may present all candidates.

The words of presentation may be altered to fit the circumstances of the authorization and the call.

Address

After the presiding minister begins the address, other ministers may address the candidate/s with one or more scripture passages, or the presiding minister may say the entire address.

When more than one candidate is commissioned, the presiding minister addresses the questions to all the candidates, and each candidate answers in turn.

Prayers of Intercession

Within the petition that provides for including the names of bishops, it is appropriate to use the first or given name (without surname) of the presiding bishop and of the bishop of the synod.

Intercessions may be included that are particularly applicable to the role in ministry of the person being commissioned. Intercessions may also be included for the spouse/family of the candidate/s and for any special concerns related to the day.

Commissioning

The assembly may be seated if there is a large number of candidates or if the circumstances otherwise suggest.

The presiding minister lays both hands on the candidate's head. To make this possible, an assisting minister holds printed service materials for the presiding minister.

The laying on of hands is accompanied first by silent prayer. Then the thanksgiving is prayed, and the laying on of hands continues throughout the prayer. It is appropriate to use the first or given name (without surname) of the candidate.

A symbol of commissioned ministry may be given, such as a cross, a Bible, a distinctive pin, or another item that is appropriate to the role that the associate in ministry will carry out. The following may be said as the item is given:

Receive this _____ as a sign of your call and commissioning as an associate in ministry.

Acclamation

After the assembly acclaims the candidates by responding to the two questions, the declaration beginning "Let it be acclaimed that *name* is commissioned . . ." is repeated for each candidate. After all the newly commissioned have been presented, the assembly may conclude the acclamation with applause.

Peace

The presiding minister begins the greeting of peace. As the service continues, the newly commissioned may serve as a communion minister.

PROPERS

When commissioning is set within the primary service of the congregation on a Sunday or festival, the propers for that Sunday or festival are normally used. The prayer of the day for commissioning may be said following the prayer of the day appointed for the Sunday or festival.

When commissioning is scheduled as a part of a special service (apart from the primary service of the congregation), propers may be selected from those listed below.

Prayer of the Day

O God, through the ages you have called women and men to particular ministries in the church. Let your blessing rest now on all who answer that call. Grant them understanding of the gospel, sincerity of purpose, diligence in ministry, and the beauty of life in Christ, that many people will be served and your name be glorified; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Readings and Psalms

Ruth 1:1-19a
Isaiah 43:8-13
Amos 5:14-15, 24
Micah 6:6-8
Habakkuk 2:1-4

Psalms 20
Psalm 40:1-11
Psalm 67
Psalm 84

Acts 6:2-7
Romans 12:1-18
1 Corinthians 1:3-9
1 Corinthians 12:4-13
1 Corinthians 13:1-7
2 Corinthians 4:1-6
2 Corinthians 5:14-20
Galatians 5:14, 22-25
Ephesians 4:1-16
Philippians 2:5-13
Hebrews 6:10-12
1 Peter 4:8-11

Matthew 5:1-6
Matthew 20:20-28
Matthew 25:31-40
Luke 12:35-38
Luke 22:24-30
John 13:12-17
John 15:1-8

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. Live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; *
strive side by side for the faith of the gospel. *Alleluia.* (Phil. 1:27)

Or, during Lent:

May I never boast of anything *
except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Gal. 6:14)

Other gospel acclamation texts that may be used:

John, Apostle and Evangelist; Conversion of Paul; Holy Cross Day; Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist; Renewers of Society; Theologians and Teachers; Artists and Scientists; Epiphany 4, year B; Lectionary 27, year A.

Hymn of the Day

401	Gracious Spirit, Heed Our Pleading
511	Thy Strong Word
518	We Eat the Bread of Teaching
551	The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve
576	We All Are One in Mission
577, 578	Creator Spirit, Heavenly Dove
617	We Come to You for Healing, Lord
743	Now to the Holy Spirit Let Us Pray
845	Voices Raised to You We Offer
850, 851	When in Our Music God Is Glorified
878	Soli Deo Gloria

Preface: Apostles

Prayer after Communion

We thank you, almighty and gracious God, that you have fed us with heavenly food, the body and blood of your Son, uniting us through him in the communion of the Holy Spirit. As you have again raised up among us a faithful *servant/s* to be an *associate* in ministry in the church of Christ, grant that we, with *name/s*, may joyfully serve you all our days and finally rejoice in your glory; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Color: of the season or of the day

INSTALLATION AT COMMISSIONING

In circumstances where a candidate is commissioned as an associate in ministry and installed at the same service, the following is inserted in the order for Commissioning prior to the greeting of peace. See the notes on the service for the Installation of an Associate in Ministry for additional helps with this section.

The presiding minister addresses the assembly.

Having been authorized by the church to install full name,
our co-worker in the gospel, as position,
I now ask for certification of this call.

A representative of the calling body addresses the presiding minister.

After prayerful deliberation,
we, of name of calling/employing body,
have called full name to serve as an *associate in ministry*
in the position of position.
I present *her/him* and this letter certifying the call.

The representative gives the presiding minister the letter certifying that the call has been received and accepted.

The presiding minister questions the associate in ministry.

Name, in the presence of this assembly
will you commit yourself to this new trust and responsibility,
Response: I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you carry out this ministry
in harmony with the constitutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in *America*?
Response: I will, and I ask God to help me.

The presiding minister addresses the associate in ministry.

Name, the ministry of position is now committed to you
in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

The service continues with the greeting of peace.