



ORDER OF SERVICE FOR AN ECUMENICAL ACT OF WORSHIP LEADERS' VERSION

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERVICE

This celebration is an invitation to explore the eight days of reflection linked to 1 Corinthians 1: 1-17. The joyful challenge to prayer and to self-examination as persons and as Christian communities springs from Paul's provocative question: "Has Christ been divided?". This biblical text and act of worship is an opportunity to consider that challenge anew in your context.

STEP BY STEP PREPARATION NOTES

The liturgy has been prepared by members of different church traditions in Canada. It is redolent with interconnected themes from their experience for praise, prayer and sorrow. There is an integrity to what has been prepared. These notes aim to help church groups from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales to use the Canadian material well. A cut and paste approach to the text is not advised but some logistical adaption to the worship space and local community may be required.

PLANNING

Arrange for a local planning group to meet where the service will take place several weeks beforehand. Three or four people are sufficient. They should represent varied traditions, and ideally include the preacher and a musician. Discuss how this service captures something of the unity, grace of God, and brokenness that you experience within and between your local churches.

PRACTICAL POINTS

Walk through the service, reading aloud the spoken words as you go, considering the movements and actions. Ensure you cover these points in your planning.

- How the ministers will enter and where they will sit.
- Which directions you will treat as east, south, west and north and how you will indicate which are which – see *Gathering in hope and unity*.
- Where leaders will speak from. Options include speaking from the front, the body of the congregation, the door, etc. If microphones are needed, work out the practicalities. If a hearing aid loop is in use make sure every participant is near a microphone.
- Whether congregational responses may be sung, especially familiar phrases such as "Lord, have mercy" or "Kyrie Eleison". Consider whether you want to do this and how you will manage the music.
- How the readings will be presented. Avoid having four readings read out conventionally in succession. Consider using music or antiphonal reading for the Psalm. The Gospel could be carried into the middle of the congregation and read from there; invite the congregation to turn and face the reader. Singing a simple Gospel acclamation, such as alleluias, can create a sense of ceremony. A simple Gospel acclamation such as singing Alleluias can be very helpful.

- What gifts will be appropriate for the *expression of mutual belonging* and how they will be presented. This is a way of responding to Paul's concern that the Corinthians have divided into factions, and his challenge: "Has Christ been divided?" We cannot live in the solitudes of our individual Christian communities and assume that we have unity. We must be willing and able to receive each other's gifts. This is a step beyond naming a gift we have to give. It asks us to consider others, and to see in them blessings that enrich the whole body of Christ. The blessing brought to the wider church by each particular tradition and represented by an object should be carefully considered and carried into the worship by the receiving traditions. Some imagination will be needed to identify the objects which represent the blessing each church gives to the others. As the gifts are brought forward they are announced using this or a similar form of words: "From the _____ church, we gratefully receive the gift of _____ represented here by _____".
- How many voices to use for the intercessions. These are probably best led by three people, one to lead the *bidding*, one to read the *statistical quotation*, and one to lead the prayer. Silence should be left between each voice as indicated by "...". A PowerPoint presentation of images connected to each section of the intercessions is provided at www.ctbi.org.uk/wpcupowerpoint. Ensure the projectionist has the text of the prayers and is familiar with how the pictures are integrated with the text. If possible, arrange for everyone involved to practise in the venue beforehand.
- Whether or not a collection will be taken and for whom. It may be particularly appropriate to give towards the relief of need and poverty in the light of the Canadian emphasis on the United Nations eight Millennium Goals. A collection is best taken in the hymn or song immediately following the intercessions. This part of the service is about the offering of ourselves, and comes immediately before the Act of Commitment.
- How to manage the practicalities of the Blessing. This can be led by more than one church leader as a sign of the common mission shared by all Christian traditions. The final hymn may come after the blessing if this is to be *Recessional*. The words of dismissal may be led from the doorway if it follows the *Recession*.

Once all the points above have been decided, ensure that all the leadership and participants' roles are allocated and mark up an order of service for each one highlighting their words and describing their movements.

MUSIC

The order of service has four hymns.

- For the hymn of praise, *Where the love of Christ unites us* (tune Ar hyd y nos) and *God is love and where true love is*, words by James Quinn, are both particularly suitable, but others will also fit.
- The offering hymn could be *I the Lord of Sea and Sky*, (tune Here I am Lord), or the song, *How good it is when we agree*.
- Suitable sending out hymns are *Go forth and tell* (tune Woodlands) or *Will you come and follow me?* (tune Kelvingrove).
- Other suitable hymns for the service are *Dear Christ, the Father's Loving Son* (tune Hampton Poyle), and *Lord, you have seen your church's needs* (tunes Saint Hugh; Saint Francis Xavier)

The metrical version of the Apostles' Creed can be sung to any 87.87 or 87.87.D tune, such as Regent's Square.

SERVICE AND HYMN SHEETS

Preprinted versions of the order of service are available at reasonable cost from www.ctbi.org.uk/wpcuprint. The service can also be downloaded from www.ctbi.org.uk/wpcudownload. Arrange for photocopying of the order of service and of a song sheet, as necessary. All the text of the congregational order of service is available on a PowerPoint from www.ctbi.org.uk/wpcupowerpoint

REHEARSAL

Arrange a rehearsal shortly before the service. Leaders and participants are likely to be unsure of what is expected of them if they are away from their usual worship venue.

HOSPITALITY

On the day of the service hospitality will be important. Ecumenism means nothing if people do not feel welcomed.