

## COMMISSIONING LITURGY

### Introduction

Many parishes are increasingly celebrating and recognising the gifts and ministries of all baptised people as we seek to Live God's Love in the church and the wider community.

This liturgy has been designed for parishes or benefices which might wish to commission people for particular ministries. This might include, for example, the PCC, church wardens, pastoral or bereavement visitors, children's and youth workers, sidespeople or welcomers, or those taking Communion to the housebound. It can be used for individuals or for teams. It is intended to be parish-based, acknowledging a local calling which may have been more formally endorsed by the PCC. Training may also have been undertaken and the expectation is that those commissioned will actively seek to continue to grow in their faith, gifts and skills. The liturgy affirms the calling of all baptised people to service and ministry and, while not wanting to devalue others' ministries, also offers a means of valuing and affirming people's particular ministries and praying for them in the context of public worship. As new people are commissioned, it is also an opportunity publicly to acknowledge and thank those who may be stepping down from a particular role.

The liturgy may be adapted for local use and circumstances, for example by inserting the relevant ministry/ies, indicating where appropriate that some training has been completed, or perhaps adding a blessing for those commissioned. The passage of Scripture could be omitted if it is felt that the service would otherwise be too long, although this sets the context of the varieties of ministries exercised by God's people. It is hoped that everyone can join in the Living God's Love prayer, but it could be said by the incumbent alone. The intention is for the liturgy to take place during a main act of worship on a Sunday, but where the liturgy is placed in a service is flexible: after the sermon, before the intercessions or the Peace at the Eucharist, or after the third collect at morning or evening prayer may be suitable places, but local circumstances will vary.

How often it is used by a parish also needs to be considered. For example, the commissioning of the new PCC or church wardens may be an annual event after the APCM. Similarly some parishes may wish to commission children's and youth workers at the start of each academic year. For others, it may be more appropriate to use it at the start of a particular ministry (e.g. the commissioning of a new pastoral visiting team). Thought will then need to be given as to how new members are commissioned and publicly acknowledged in future years. This may, for example, be done by the parish priest at a local team meeting, with people simply being named and prayed for during a Sunday service.

The liturgy has been produced through the collaboration of the Diocesan Liturgical Committee and the Parish Development Officer. We hope that it will be a further resource for parishes as together we encourage one another in Christian discipleship.

January 2013

# Commissioning Liturgy

## For use when commissioning people and teams in a local context

*Living God's Love*

The Diocese of St Albans

# Commissioning Liturgy

*Churchwarden:* I ask you on behalf of this congregation to commission *N* for the work of *X* [e.g. *Pastoral Visitor(s)*] in this parish.

*The Incumbent addresses the whole congregation.*

*Incumbent:* St Paul, writing to the Christians in Rome says, 'For 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*)

*Incumbent:* People of God, Christ invites each of us to faithful discipleship and service. We are all called to different ministries as we seek to live God's love. As we commission *these people* today, will you, with *them*, and as baptised disciples of Christ, renew your commitment to the loving service of God, of one another and of all people?

*Congregation:* **With the help of God, we will.**

*Incumbent:* *These people* have been called to the work of [*X*] in this Parish. Will you, as the people of God here in this place, support and pray for them in this ministry?

*Congregation:* **With the help of God, we will.**

*The Incumbent addresses those to be commissioned.*

*Incumbent:* *N*, do you believe that God has called you to this ministry?

*Response:* I/We do.

*Incumbent:* Will you, as long as you are engaged in this work, seek to perform it prayerfully and in a spirit of mutual respect and collaboration with those who lead ministry in this place?

*Response:* With the help of God, I/we will.

*Incumbent:* Will you seek to develop the faith, gifts and skills God has given you as you share in Christ's mission and ministry?

*Response:* With the help of God, I/we will.

*Incumbent:* As Incumbent, I commission you as [*X*] in this Parish, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. May God grant you grace, wisdom and joy as you live out this calling.

*Congregation:* **Amen.**

*The 'Living God's Love' prayer is said:*

**Living God, draw us deeper into your love;  
Jesus our Lord, send us to care and serve;  
Holy Spirit, make us heralds of good news.  
Stir us, strengthen us, teach and inspire us  
to live your love with generosity and joy,  
imagination and courage;  
for the sake of your world  
and in the name of Jesus,  
Amen**