

Order of Service for Membership

For those converted seeking baptism as adults, confirmation of faith for ministry, reaffirmation of faith, and official membership within the local congregation after a period of instruction

THE INTRODUCTION

The minister reads this introduction:

The Lord Jesus Christ said: All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. *Matthew 28: 18-20.*

Since the time of Abraham God's people have been given a sign of admission to his covenant by means of which God reassures his children that he is their God and they his people. In the New Testament baptism replaced circumcision as the sign, but the covenant itself remains the same. Those who believe God's promise and trust in Christ alone for salvation, are made the spiritual heirs of Abraham and the children of God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered death on the cross and rose again from the dead for our salvation. Baptism is the outward sign of all that God does for us in Christ. He unites us with him in his death, grants us forgiveness of sins for his sake and raises us with him to new life in the Spirit.

The minister says: Let us pray. Almighty and eternal God, who in mercy saved Noah and his family in the days of the flood, and who safely led the children of Israel through the waters of the Red Sea, symbolising thereby holy baptism; and by the baptism of your Son, Jesus Christ, sanctified water to represent the washing away of sin: look in mercy on *this person*. Wash *him*, and sanctify *him* with the Holy Spirit; deliver *him* from your wrath; receive *him* into the ark of Christ's church; make *him* firm in faith and joyful through hope; and fill *him* with your love so that, passing through the waters of this troubled world, *he* may finally come to the land of everlasting life, there to reign with you forever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

The appointed reader reads the following passages from Scripture:

John 3:1-21 Reader concludes with: "Here ends the Reading"

Psalm 51

Acts 2:40-47 Reader concludes with: "Here ends the Reading"

There may be an exposition of the aforementioned Scripture passages.

THE DECLARATION OF REPENTANCE, FAITH, AND OBEDIENCE

The candidate(s) desiring baptism, confirmation, reaffirmation of faith, and membership within this local congregation stand(s), and the minister says:

The Scriptures teach that all people are conceived and born with a sinful nature; and you have heard in these words of our Savior Christ that no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Holy Spirit. The sacramental sign of the new birth is baptism. Those who

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come to be baptized must affirm their allegiance to Christ and their rejection of all that displeases God. It is your duty to fight against evil and to follow Christ. Therefore, I ask:

Do you renounce the devil and all his works, the empty show and false values of the world, and the sinful desires of the flesh, so that you will not follow nor be led by them?

Answer:

I renounce them all.

Minister:

Do you believe and trust in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, who loved the world so much that he sent his Son to die for us?

Do you believe and trust in his only Son Jesus Christ, who was crucified for our sins, rose from the dead, and is the only way of salvation?

Do you believe and trust in his Holy Spirit, who enables us to receive God's word, repent, and believe the gospel?

Answer:

I believe and trust in the one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Minister:

Do you, before God and this congregation, confirm, reaffirm or seek baptism into this faith?

Answer:

I do, by God's grace.

Minister:

Do you desire, then, to keep God's holy will and commandments all the days of your life?

Answer:

I do, by God's grace.

THE BAPTISM

The minister baptizes the candidate(s) with water, saying:

N, I baptize you in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. ***Amen***

THE CHARGE

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We receive you into Christ's congregation,
and sign you with the sign of the cross (*may use oil*).

We pray that you will not be ashamed
to confess the faith of Christ crucified (*may light a candle*).

(*All:*) Fight bravely under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil; and continue as Christ's faithful soldier and servant by His Spirit to the end of your life. Amen.

Then the minister says to those recently baptized:

We praise you, most merciful Father, that all whom you receive and adopt as your own are spiritually regenerate and made true members of your church; and we pray you to grant that *this person*, being buried and raised with Christ, may have victory over sin, the world, and the devil, that *he* may live *a righteous life*, and that at the end *he* may inherit your eternal kingdom along with all your faithful people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE REAFFIRMATION (CONFRIMATION IF BISHOP IS PRESENT) OF FAITH FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THIS LOCAL CONGREGATION

The minister reads these words to those already baptized and seeking to serve as Christ's disciples within the local congregation with Spirit-empowered gifts and talents:

Our church requires that all who come to confirm or reaffirm their baptismal vows in the faith of Christ Jesus should know and understand the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and be able to answer the other questions in the catechism. This local covenant community through catechists and/or pastoral elders, serving as sponsors, has instructed and examined those standing here in the presence of God and this congregation in The Heidelberg Catechism.

Let all, who have been baptized into Christ, confess what we believe according to the Nicene Creed:

(*All:*) I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible:

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God; Begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God; Begotten, not made; Being of one substance with the Father; By whom all things were made: Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man: And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried: And

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the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures: And ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father: And he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, The Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spake by the Prophets: And I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church: I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins: And I look for the Resurrection of the dead: And the Life of the world to come. Amen.

The minister continues with the public examination of those seeking to confirm and/or reaffirm their faith within this local covenant community for service and growth as disciples of Christ:

Bishop/Minister:

Do you believe that you are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in the merits of Christ alone, as revealed in the Bible alone, to the glory of God alone?

Do you, before God and this congregation, affirm The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion as the doctrinal articulation of this local covenant community's English Reformed ('Anglican') confession?

Do you embrace the corporate mission of this local evangelical congregation as that which was commanded by our Lord Jesus and recorded in **Matthew 28:18-20** also known as The Great Commission of making disciples of all people?

Do you thankfully and whole-heartedly trust that the Gospel of Jesus' Person and work is, not only for conversion but, central for Christian discipleship leading to progressive transformation into the image and likeness of our Savior Jesus by His Spirit to the glory of His Father?

Answer:

I do, by God's grace.

Bishop/Minister:

All those baptized into Christ here today covenant themselves to faithfully serve, by God's grace, as Members of Christ's Body within this local congregation making the following pledge:

(All:) I Will Be a Unifying Church Member.

I Will Not Let the Church Be About My Preferences and Desires.

I Will Pray for My Church Leaders.

I Will Lead My Family to Be Healthy Church Members.

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I Will Be a Functioning Member utilizing my Spiritual gifts, talents, time, and money as blessings from God that ultimately belong to Him.

I Will Treasure Church Membership as a Gift by regular involvement in the Assembly's weekly Service and Bible study.

Bishop/Minister:

Let us pray that God will strengthen with his Holy Spirit these persons who now confirm their commitment to those promises made at their baptism and that they will serve Christ the Lord faithfully all their days.

(All:)

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who has made heaven and earth. Blessed be the name of the Lord now and for evermore. Lord, hear our prayer, and let our cry come to you.

Bishop/Minister:

Almighty and ever-living God, by whose grace these your servants have been born again of water and the Spirit and have received forgiveness of all their sins: strengthen them with the Holy Spirit the Comforter; daily increase in them your gifts of grace; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of guidance and strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness, and fill them, O Lord, with the spirit of your holy fear, both now and forever. ***Amen***

Those who have come to confirmation kneel before the bishop. He lays his hand upon the head of each and prays:

Defend, O Lord, your servant *N*
with your heavenly grace,
that *he* may continue as yours for ever;
and that *he* may daily increase in your Holy Spirit (*may use oil*)
until *he* comes into the fullness of your eternal kingdom. ***Amen***

All candidates presented now come forward to print their first and last names, sign, and date The Record of Membership within this local congregation as a solemnization of their covenant.

EXCHANGE OF PEACE AND GREETING OF MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S BODY
(The Service will resume its normal Order of the Lord's Supper with the Offering)