

## THE LOVE FEAST

The love feast is rich in tradition, symbolism, and Christian community. It is a service in which portions of bread, the element of a simple meal, are distributed to those present and shared with each other as members of one family united by love.

The love feast has its roots in the Agape meal of the early church. Luke records of the early Christians, "Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people" (Acts 2:46-47, NIV).

The symbolic breaking of bread carries profound meaning from the ancient rituals of the Old Testament to the present fellowship of believers. The Passover bread symbolizes to this day the power of God to deliver His people from bondage. The broken and shared bread of the Last Supper represents the willing sacrifice of Christ that we might not die.

Reconciliation of the most noble sort is represented in the breaking of bread. The broken bread offered by Jesus to the disciples, including Judas, in the Upper Room was a final act of forgiving love on the part of the Master. When Jesus fed the multitude with five broken loaves and two fish He demonstrated His caring love for all people in need. This simple yet miraculous act opened the compassionate heart of Jesus to a hungry multitude. Hence the breaking of bread in many different ways and places becomes a significant part of the miracle-producing fellowship experienced in the early church.

It is both a celebration of the forgiving love of Christ at Calvary and a participation in that love in the fellowship of reconciled, joy-filled believers.

The love feast practiced in the Methodist tradition was borrowed from the Moravians for reasons given by Wesley himself:

In order to increase in them [persons in bands] a grateful sense of all God's mercies, I desired that one evening in a quarter all men in band, on a second all the women, would meet, and on a third both men and women together, that we might together "eat bread," as the ancient Christians did, "with gladness and singleness of heart." At these love-feasts (so we termed them, retaining the name as well as the thing, which was in use from the beginning) our food is only a little plain cake and water; but we seldom return from them without being fed not only with the "meat which perisheth," but with "that which endureth to everlasting life."

In larger Methodist societies the love feast was held every quarter on a Sunday afternoon or following the Sunday evening

service. Smaller societies observed it only once a year. Methodist historian Dr. Frank Baker attributed the decline and virtual disappearance of the Love Feast to the fact that it was a product and instrument of revivalism.

Although the observance of the love feast has declined in Free Methodism in recent years, where it has been re-introduced it provides the church an opportunity to maintain “singleness of heart” through forgiving love which overcomes petty differences or misunderstandings.

### **Love Feast and Breaking of Bread**

(An Order of Service)

(Designed to fulfill Par. A/379, in the *Book of Discipline*, “The Love Feast.”)

#### Opening Sentences

Dear friends, let us love one another; for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. This is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another God lives in us and His love is made complete in us (1 John 4:7, 10-12, NIV).

Hymn “The Bond of Love”

“Our God Is Love, and All His Saints”

#### Silent Meditation

*(Allow time for personal introspection and inquiry.)*

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psalms 139:23-24 NIV).

Am I willing to know myself and accept responsibility for what I am and for what I do, or do I blame others?

Am I honest, or do I profess principles in public that I do not practice in private?

Am I more severe in my judgment of others than I am in judgment of myself?

Am I making demands upon others which I do not make of myself?

Am I listening to others so I may understand them, or do I think only of my own thoughts when others speak?

Am I gracious and courteous toward all my family, my associates, and the strangers whom I meet?

Am I forgiving toward all who have wronged me or spoken unkindly, remembering that God forgives even more through Christ Jesus my Lord?

Am I doing all in my power to keep peace and unity within the fellowship of Christian believers?

Am I ready to ask forgiveness of any I have wronged, humbling myself that Jesus Christ may be exalted in the congregation?

Am I willing to be known by others and to love my Christian brothers and sisters when I know them?

Am I ready to speak with others, "Not to please men, but to please God who tests our hearts" (1 Thessalonians 2:4)?

Prayer

*(The leader may offer prayer or give opportunity for extemporaneous prayer by others.)*

*(Bread may be distributed at this time, before the hymn, with instructions for sharing. Following the singing of the hymn, let the people move out to mingle with all others, to take from each other the proffered bread, and to speak to one another in love and appreciation quietly and sincerely.)*

Hymn "We Are One in the Spirit,"

*(When the time of sharing ends, let ushers gather the leftovers from the worshipers. Let the people stand to sing. They may form a circle and clasp hands if convenient and appropriate.)*

Hymn "Blest Be the Tie That Binds,"

*(The service may include testimonies or conclude with Holy Communion.)*

Benediction

May the Eternal God whose name is Lord give His Spirit, and may the Holy Spirit pour into your heart God's love, through Jesus Christ who said, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35).

Order of service contributed by Bishop Emeritus Paul N. Ellis

## THE USE OF THE ALTAR

For thousands of years the altar has been a favored meeting place between God and His people. In some traditions, it has been known as the “communion rail” where the fellowship of Eden could be partially recaptured. The pastor has the treasured responsibility to make the altar a welcome place to which the people come freely and often to “find grace to help in time of need.”

The altar as we know it in the Free Methodist Church symbolizes, in part, the “mourner’s bench” of camp meeting revivalism in America’s frontier days. It serves the practical need of a place for prayer, confession, and communion with God in the presence of the congregation. Symbolically, it still represents a place of sacrifice as the penitent seeker presents himself to God as a living offering and experiences the forgiveness and acceptance of the Savior.

The altar can be used in a variety of ways in addition to the place where persons with specific spiritual needs come to seek the Lord:

1. It may be used for small group prayer meetings such as a men’s early Sunday morning or a noon-hour meeting for prayer and fasting.
2. Members of the congregation may be invited to pray at the altar during the pastoral prayer.
3. Candidates for membership are brought to the altar as a symbol of their dedication to Christ and the church.
4. The altar is often used as a place of confession and communion during the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.
5. The congregation may be invited to commitment in prayer around the altar as a conclusion to the sermon.
6. The altar is an appropriate place for a healing service, particularly The Service of Prayer for the Healing of Human Hurts (see p. 73).

Churches are encouraged to include an altar in the structural planning of the place of worship.

## MUSIC AND SONG LEADING

Martin Luther once declared the importance of music when he said, "Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise. The gift of language combined with the gift of song was given to people that they should proclaim the Word of God through music."

Music is God's glorious gift as a vehicle of true worship. Therefore, each worship experience should include quality singing and instrumentation appropriate to the particular congregation and service style. The words should keep a balance between God-focus (hymns and scripture songs) and a person-focus (gospel songs and choruses).

The pastor is responsible for the cultivation, oversight and use of sacred music.

Qualified persons whose character and life reveal the scriptural principles and support the standards of the Free Methodist Church shall be selected to lead the singing in public worship and, where instrumental music is in use, to play the instrument(s).

The pastor is responsible to provide for the cultivation of sacred music and to guard against complexity and formality in singing. Singing is a part of divine worship in which all persons present should unite. Congregational music shall not be subordinated to special music. Hymns fitting to the occasion should be chosen, and seldom should more than four or five stanzas of one hymn be used ...

... The purpose of music in divine service is to inspire and to sustain worship. Vocal and instrumental music used in the service shall seek to contribute to reverence and exalted worship and not the display of talent.

*Par. A/378, Book of Discipline*

The singing of the hymns by the congregation is a means of grace and an act of divine worship. Singing is never a warm-up, a time-filler, or a trick to change position. It is an integral part of worship and fellowship in the Spirit.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Prepare your own spirit for leadership in worship by taking time to pray before each service, asking God to anoint you with His Spirit as a member of the worship team.

2. Request the preacher's sermon subject in order to select appropriate hymns and/or songs.

3. Select the music before the service. Write down your plans for each number. For example, indicate which stanzas will be sung.

4. Give the accompanist(s) a copy of the order of worship with full instructions on music to be used, including which stanzas will be sung.

5. When using choruses with an overhead projector make certain that:

- a. The projector operator is prepared with the overheads in the order of use;
- b. The operator understands how to position the transparencies; and
- c. The projection results are clear enough to be seen by all the worshippers. Whenever possible project the music with the words to assist newcomers in learning the choruses. This will also encourage singing in harmony.
- d. Christian Copyright License, Inc. (CCLI) permission is secured. (This is required whenever words for songs are printed or projected for the congregation.)

6. The economy of words is always in order in the leadership of worship, and this applies to those who contribute in any way to the music of the service. A song leader announces a hymn with no more than one or two carefully thought out sentences. If the congregation is singing well, they need not be interrupted between stanzas with comments or exhortations.

7. Avoid giving a lesson in hymnology in the morning worship service. This is occasionally appropriate at a designated time for hymn appreciation or learning new hymns and songs.

8. Never banter the congregation into singing louder or faster or with a wider smile. This diminishes the spirit of worship by calling attention to performance. Concentration on the words and music under good direction and accompaniment will yield the fruit of edification, joy, and harmonious enthusiasm. The mechanics of song leading should always be kept in the background.

9. It is inappropriate to thank the congregation for their good singing. They aren't singing for you, the song leader. All are singing in praise to God in the joy of His great salvation. He is the one to be thanked!

10. If you will be leading singing, ask a professional musician for help with conducting simple time signatures. Maintain a good tempo, neither too fast nor too slow. Practice in front of a mirror.

If you direct with one hand, direct the rhythm of the words for the congregation. If are able to use both hands separately, you may conduct the singing with one hand and the beat for the instruments with the other.

It is not necessary to sing louder than the congregation in order to lead with your voice.

11. Instrumentalists are members of the leadership team. However, they should generally accompany the singing, except for the rare situation where it is important for them to lead. Instrumentalists must be sensitive to keep a balance of harmony and volume between instruments and voices. Balance carefully the naturally loud instruments such as brass and drums.

## USHERING

Next to the public worship leaders, the ushers have more influence on the quality of the worship service than anyone else present. They influence the service by their sense of reverence, their skill in ushering, their warmth with visitors, their ability to cope with emergencies, and their all-around conduct.

### General Guidelines

1. Arrive at least fifteen minutes before the service is scheduled; earlier if capacity attendance is expected.

2. Attend services regularly in order to understand the flow of the worship service and lead by example.

3. Dress as you would for any public event of significance in your community. The way you dress should contribute to a sense of the presence of God.

4. Be an exemplary worshiper. Avoid either stiff formality or undue casualness. Gum chewing, lounging against walls, or preoccupied socializing with one another are not in good taste.

5. Consider yourself on duty from the time you take your assignments until after the service. During all this time, be friendly and helpful — providing assistance when appropriate, answering inquiries about telephone and rest room, locating persons in the congregation who are needed for emergencies, etc. As far as possible learn the names of regular worshipers in order to greet them personally.

6. Be responsive at all times to the leadership of whoever is in charge.

7. Value your partnership with the pastor and worship team. Be alert to needs which only you can help solve (ventilation, lights, parishioner becoming ill in service, etc.).

### Methods of Seating

Seating methods should be demonstrated by the pastor or head usher at a training session. You will be responsible to learn and follow these instructions.

### Methods for Taking Offerings

If you are responsible for collecting the offering, the procedure should be demonstrated by the head usher. For example, when you move to the first pews to receive the offering, you should be attentive to the orderly passing of the offering plates through each pew, moving unobtrusively down the aisle. Your attention should focus, not on the people and their giving, but upon the orderly and natural way in which the offering is received.

**Absence**

If you must be absent, notify the head usher and, if asked to do so, arrange for a substitute as far in advance as possible.

## SPECIAL SERVICES

### Sample Organization of a New Free Methodist Fellowship

Invocation

Hymn of Praise

Responsive Reading

Prayer

Ministry in Music

Sermon

*(An appropriate subject is the New Testament view of the church as the body of Christ.)*

Ritual for Organization as a Fellowship

*(The superintendent, or other designated pastor, calls those who have been members of a Free Methodist Fellowship or those who wish to form a new fellowship to the front.)*

**Superintendent or Designee:** Having faith in Christ and His Holy Bible, and having received instruction in the beliefs and organization of the Free Methodist Church of North America, is it your desire to form a fellowship as the first step toward becoming a Free Methodist Church?

**People:** It is by the grace of God.

**Superintendent or Designee:** What shall be the name of this fellowship?

**People** *(or the pastor or a representative of the congregation):*

This will be known as the \_\_\_\_\_ (name of fellowship) Free Methodist Fellowship of \_\_\_\_\_ (city and state).

**Superintendent or Designee:** I now declare that the \_\_\_\_\_ (name of fellowship) Free Methodist Fellowship of \_\_\_\_\_ (city and state) is duly organized and invite each of you to join by answering the questions contained in the ritual of membership.

*(The superintendent or designee will then proceed with the ritual according to Par. A/353 of the Book of Discipline. After concluding with the questions, the superintendent or designee may offer an extemporaneous prayer.)*

**Superintendent or Designee:** (Optional)

*(Those being received into membership shall kneel, and the minister, laying hands upon each of them in turn, shall say:)*

I receive you into membership in the Free Methodist Church. May the Lord confirm you in faith and fellowship as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Amen.

*(Those being received shall rise, and the minister, addressing the candidates, shall say:)*

We rejoice to recognize you as members of the Free Methodist Church and charter members of the (name of fellowship) Free Methodist fellowship. We bid you welcome to all its privileges. In token of our brotherly love we give you the right hand of fellowship and pray that you may be numbered with His people here and with His saints in glory everlasting. May the church be a blessing to you, and you to the church.

Friends, I commend you, each to the other, to love and care for one another, and to do all in your power to strengthen each other's faith, confirm each other in hope, and perfect each other in love.

Hymn

Benediction

## Sample Organization of a New Free Methodist Society

Invocation

Hymn of Praise

Responsive Reading

Prayer

Ministry in Music

Sermon

*(An appropriate subject is the New Testament view of the church as the body of Christ.)*

Ritual for Organization as a Society

*(The superintendent, or other designated pastor, calls those who have been members of a Free Methodist Fellowship or those who wish to form a new society to the front.)*

**Superintendent or Designee:** Having read the Constitution of the Free Methodist Church of North America contained in the *Book of Discipline* and having familiarized yourselves with the policies and practices of the church contained therein, do you now adopt this *Book of Discipline* as your rule and authority in organizing a new Free Methodist Church?

**People:** With thankful hearts to God, we do.

**Superintendent or Designee:** What will the society now formed be named?

**People** (or the pastor or a representative of the congregation): This society will be known as the \_\_\_\_\_ (name of society) Free Methodist Church of \_\_\_\_\_ (city and state).

**Superintendent or Designee:** I now declare that the \_\_\_\_\_ (name of society) Free Methodist Church of \_\_\_\_\_ (city and state) is duly organized and invite each of you to join by answering the questions contained in the ritual of membership.

*(The superintendent or designee will then proceed with the ritual according to Par. A/353 of the Book of Discipline. After concluding with the questions, the superintendent or designee may offer an extemporaneous prayer.)*

**Superintendent or Designee:** (Optional)

*(Those being received into membership shall kneel, and the minister, laying hands upon each of them in turn, shall say:)*

I receive you into membership in the Free Methodist Church. May the Lord confirm you in faith and fellowship as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Amen.

*(Those being received shall rise, and the minister, addressing the candidates, shall say:)*

We rejoice to recognize you as members of the Free Methodist Church and charter members of the (name of society) Free Methodist Society. We bid you welcome to all its privileges. In token of our brotherly love we give you the right hand of fellowship and pray that you may be numbered with His people here and with His saints in glory everlasting. May the church be a blessing to you, and you to the church.

Friends, I commend you, each to the other, to love and care for one another, and to do all in your power to strengthen each other's faith, confirm each other in hope, and perfect each other in love.

Hymn

Benediction

## ADMISSION INTO MEMBERSHIP

1. The conditions for membership in the Free Methodist Church are:
  - a. awakening to God, a desire to seek God (Par. A/301);
  - b. assent to participate in the maturing opportunities offered by the church, such as classes, Bible studies and small groups (Par. A/307);
  - c. evidence of genuine conversion (Par. A/302);
  - d. receiving the catechism of baptism and the sacrament of baptism, or, if baptized in infancy, giving public assent to the baptismal covenant (Par. A/124);
  - e. completing the approved course of instruction for prospective members, which clearly teaches the history, theological distinctive and mission of the Free Methodist Church;
  - f. commitment to the membership covenant (Pars. A/154-160), and the Christian Conduct section of the *Book of Discipline* (Pars. A/315-342);
  - g. interview by the pastor and/or membership care committee, who will verify the person's conversion, baptism and willingness to commit to a holy Christian life (Pars. A/306-307);
  - h. approval by the church's official board upon recommendation of the membership care committee (Par. A/404.4, Sec.4); and
  - i. giving affirmative answers to the questions for membership before a public meeting of the church (Par. A/353.1).
2. The numbering of the above steps for membership is the normative order. The sequence of some steps may vary according to individual need. The purpose is to allow new believers or transfers to:
  - a. identify life issues and receive assistance;
  - b. identify theological/doctrinal questions and attain answers; and
  - c. learn the mission of the church and express commitment to it.

A local church or annual conference may designate steps 1:a-c as preparatory membership. The ritual for reception into preparatory membership (Par. A/360) may be used.

*(Those who are to be received into membership shall be called forward [by name, if desired] and the pastor, addressing the people, shall say:)*

Into this holy fellowship the persons before you, who have received the sacrament of baptism, who have learned the nature of these privileges and duties, who have been instructed in the teachings and mission of the Free Methodist Church, and who have been approved by the official board, come to be welcomed into full membership. We now propose, in the fear of God, to question them as to their faith and purpose, that you may know that they are ready to be admitted into this church.

*(Ritual other than questions and answers is optional.)*

*(Then, addressing those seeking admission, the pastor shall say:)*

Beloved in the Lord, you have come to be received into membership in the Free Methodist Church. We rejoice that you have decided to undertake the privileges and duties of membership in this church. Before you are admitted, you shall here publicly renew your vows, confess your faith, and declare your purpose, by answering the following questions:

*(\*\*See page 56 for questions for those with limited learning skills.)*

1. Have you now the assurance of the Holy Spirit that your sins are forgiven through faith in Jesus Christ?
2. Do you now experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit with His cleansing of heart and empowerment for service, or, if not, will you seek His fullness through study, counsel, and prayer?
3. Do you intend to serve God by the full use of the abilities He has given you?
4. Do you believe the Holy Scriptures to be the revealed will of God containing all things necessary to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ?
5. Do you accept the Articles of Religion, the Membership Covenant, and the Organization and Government of the Free Methodist Church, and will you endeavor to live in harmony with them?
6. Will you, in fellowship with your pastor and fellow members, avail yourself of the means of grace, such as, public worship of God, the ministry of the Word, the Lord's Supper, family and private prayer, and the searching of the Scriptures?
7. Will you practice the principles of Christian stewardship, giving freely of your time, talents, and possessions to Christ and His church?

*(Here the pastor shall introduce each candidate to the congregation, and shall continue as follows:)*

You, my fellow-members of this congregation, have heard the vows of these who have completed the requirements for membership in the Free Methodist Church. Let us now welcome them into our fellowship.

*(The method of welcoming shall be left to the discretion of the pastor.)*

*(Here the pastor may offer an extemporaneous prayer.)*

This is optional:

*(Then those to be received into membership shall kneel, and the pastor laying hands upon each of them in turn, shall say:)*

\_\_\_\_\_, I receive you into the fellowship of the Free Methodist Church. May the Lord confirm you in the faith and fellowship of the true disciples of Jesus Christ. Amen.

*(Those being received shall rise, and the pastor addressing the candidates, shall say:)*

We rejoice to recognize you as members of the Free Methodist Church and bid you welcome to all its privileges; and in token of our love we give you the right hand of fellowship and pray that you may be numbered with His people here and with His saints in glory everlasting. May the church be a blessing to you, and may you be a blessing to the church.

*(Then shall the pastor say to the congregation:)*

Friends in Christ, I commend to your love and care these persons whom we this day recognize as members of our church. Do all in your power to strengthen their faith, confirm their hope, and perfect them in love.

*Book of Discipline, Par. A/353*

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\*\* The following questions may be used in receiving those with limited learning skills as members of the Free Methodist Church when the other requirements of Par. A/353 have been met.

1. Do you know that Jesus loves you?
2. Do you love Jesus?
3. Will you do what God wants you to do?
4. Do you understand that the Bible is God's book that tells us about Himself?
5. Do you love this church?
6. Will you come to church and take part in the activities that are going on during our services?
7. Will you pray at home and share in the reading of the Bible?
8. Will you do what you can to help our church tell others about Jesus?

**ADMISSION INTO PREPARATORY MEMBERSHIP**  
— **Optional** —

(For use in those annual conferences or local churches who choose to follow the provisions of Par. A/360. Ritual other than questions and answers is optional.)

*(Those who are to be received as preparatory members shall be called forward by name, the pastor, addressing the people, shall say:)*

Dearly beloved, that none may be admitted into the Free Methodist Church without instruction, we receive persons who seek fellowship with us into preparatory membership, during which they may be properly instructed, and also give proof, both to themselves and to the church, of the sincerity and depth of their convictions and of the strength and purpose of their desire to lead a new life.

*(Then addressing the persons seeking admission as preparatory members, the pastor shall say:)*

Beloved in the Lord, you have by the grace of God made your decision to follow Christ and to serve Him. Your confidence in so doing is to be based not on any notion of fitness or worthiness in yourselves, but on the gracious promise of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ who loved us and gave himself for us.

That the church may know your purpose, will you please answer the following questions:

1. Do you have the assurance that God has forgiven your sins through faith in Jesus Christ?

Answer: I have.

2. Are you willing to receive membership instruction as offered by our church?

Answer: I am.

3. Have you received Christian baptism?

Answer: Yes or no.

If not, will you receive this sacrament at a duly appointed time?

Answer: Yes.

4. You have been won to Christ. Will you endeavor to win others to Christ and the church?

Answer: I will.

*(Then shall the pastor say:)*

On behalf of the Free Methodist Church and in the hope that you will go forward to complete membership therein, I extend to you a cordial welcome.

*(Then shall the pastor offer extemporaneous prayer.)*

## ADMISSION INTO YOUTH MEMBERSHIP

*(Those who are to be received as youth members shall be called forward [by name, if desired] and the pastor shall say:)*

Beloved, our Lord Jesus, by His Holy Word, has expressly given to everyone who believes in Him a place in His kingdom and church. Before you are admitted into the church, it becomes my duty to inquire of you as to your purpose of mind and heart.

1. Do you believe that Jesus Christ has forgiven your sins and is now your Savior?

Answer: I do.

2. Have you received Christian baptism\*, or if not, are you willing to be baptized?

Answer: Yes.

3. Have you attended, or if not, will you attend your pastor's class of instruction on living the Christian life and serving God through your church?

Answer: Yes.

4. As a faithful member, will you pray for your church, attend regularly, give to your church, and help wherever you can?

Answer: Yes.

5. Will you try to show others by the way you live what it means to be a Christian, and will you do your best to bring them to Christ?

Answer: I will.

### Optional

*(Here the pastor may offer an extemporaneous prayer. Then those to be received as youth members shall kneel, and the minister, laying hands upon each of them in turn, shall say:)*

I receive you into the fellowship of the Free Methodist Church as a youth member. May God confirm you in the faith and fellowship of all true disciples of Jesus Christ. Amen.

*Book of Discipline, Par. A/363*

\*Those received into youth membership who have been baptized in infancy are required to affirm the baptismal vows. See Paragraph A/903, *Book of Discipline*.



## A SERVICE OF PRAYER FOR THE HEALING OF HUMAN HURTS

Prepare the congregation in advance.

1. Preach on the healing miracles of Jesus.
2. Recruit prayer support from the intercessory groups in the church.
3. Explain the purpose and nature of the service of prayer for the healing of human hurts.
4. Assure the people that every request will be kept in strict confidence.

Prepare yourself and several others who will assist you in praying at the altar.

1. Remember that the moments with each seeker at the altar are for prayer only. If counseling is needed, suggest that it be arranged at another time.
2. Prepare your hearts through fasting and prayer the previous week and during a time of prayer and meditation immediately preceding the service.
3. Prepare the order of service to include appropriate music, a brief meditation (perhaps on a healing miracle of Jesus), and a testimony of healing from one of your people.

Prepare the people to come to the service ready to write on their prayer cards a specific concern of their own or a burden they carry for another. Encourage them to be honest in describing in a few words the deepest concerns of their own lives — physical, emotional, or spiritual.

After hymns and scripture readings\* which magnify the love of God and the healing ministry of Jesus through the Holy Spirit, ask the people to come forward and kneel opposite you and the others who assist you, presenting their cards with explicit needs indicated. Spend a few moments in faith-filled prayer with them. Allow them to remain in quiet meditation until they wish to return to their places.

As music plays quietly in the background, people will come to share with you burdens and hurts of which you had no knowledge.

It may be appropriate to ask for personal testimonies following if time allows.

Printed prayer cards and attractive folders with appropriate Scripture and readings are available at modest cost from Light and Life Communications. You may wish to print your own using the following suggestion:

**PRAYER CARD:**

Name

Personal needs

My prayer burden for another

**FOLDER:**

Jesus said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Each of us carries a concern for a friend. Many of us have burdens of our own which are too heavy to bear. There are broken places in either body, mind, or spirit which only Christ can heal.

Our risen Lord stands among His people in a service such as this, welcoming you to come with your burden, with your hurt, and let Him touch you with His healing love.

As you come to share your need with God and one of the intercessors at the altar, your Christian friends will be praying for you.

We invite each of you to become a part of a caring, praying congregation. During this hour let the creative work of the Holy Spirit bring to you a new realization that Christ is carrying the heaviest part of your burden for someone else.

"Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

— *Jesus*

**(Front cover:** A Service of Prayer for the Healing of Human Hurts Scripture reference, Matthew 12:15, "And many followed Him, and He healed them all. ...")

**\*Suggested readings:** Isaiah 53:4-6; Psalms 46:1-3,10-11; Luke 4:16-21; John 5:1-8; Romans 8:26-27; Hebrews 7:23-28 and 10:19-23.

## INSTALLATION OF CHURCH STAFF

*(This service is to be used for the installation of full-time staff members of local churches, preferably in a service of worship, following the preaching of the Word. The officiating minister [senior pastor or superintendent] shall invite the new staff member(s) to meet before the altar and say:)*

Dear friends in Christ, (name) \_\_\_\_\_ have/has been appointed to minister in the life of this congregation as (position) \_\_\_\_\_. We gather now to install them/him/her and to pray fervently for their/his/her effectiveness in this ministry. Let us hear the word of the gospel.

“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16, NIV).

Let us hear the word of the epistles.

“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves” (Romans 12:3-10, NIV).

Jesus called James and John from the care of their fishing nets, Matthew from the customs office, Priscilla and Aquila from their livelihood in Rome. All these, and a host besides, have been chosen by God to serve His people and enlarge His kingdom on earth.

Moreover, it has pleased God to grant His servants with gifts suited to their task. He granted to Bezaleel the skill to fashion gold and silver; upon Joshua He bestowed the gift of leadership; upon Isaiah He poured the spirit of prophecy. In the days of the apostles, He empowered His people to teach, heal, administer, and evangelize, all to the glory of His name.

We therefore approach this hour with the confidence that He has appointed (names) \_\_\_\_\_ to carry out a ministry of \_\_\_\_\_ and that He will provide all grace needed for the work.

To the staff member:

Will you accept this ministry with dependence upon the grace of God for its fulfillment?

Will you nurture the gifts you have been given and the skills you have acquired and use them for the advancement of our Lord's Kingdom within and beyond our congregation?

To the congregation:

Will you open your lives to the ministry of \_\_\_\_\_ and support them/him/her through your prayers and cooperation?

Let us pray.

Almighty God, You have built the church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, making Jesus Christ Himself the chief cornerstone. Grant therefore that through the power of Your Holy Spirit Your church everywhere may bear living witness to Your calling and election and may labor fervently to do Your will on earth.

To this end grant that this congregation may be given divine energy to know and fulfill Your purpose, worshipping You with gladness and sharing Your saving goodness with all mankind. Grant especially that these, Your servants, inducted this day into special ministry among Your people, may receive divine anointing so that all they attempt for You may be done effectually and in the Spirit of Christ; through whom we pray with confidence and thanksgiving. Amen.

*(The secretary or other elected officer will then present to the inductee a scroll list of the congregational members and attendees and say:)*

This Love/Care list represents people in this community whom God has given this church to care for, love, evangelize, and enfold in membership, so that those whom He has created will be saved and His work enlarged in this place. Take this as a symbol of your partnering with this congregation, to carry out the ministry to which God has called us together.

*(The officiating minister shall then invite the inductees to speak to the congregation briefly about their personal experiences with Christ, the providence which has led to this induction, and their vision for the work.)*

*(The minister or an officer appointed shall respond, offering words of welcome, pledges of loyalty on behalf of the church, and promises of prayer and cooperation.)*

Closing hymn and Benediction

## INSTALLATION OF OFFICIAL BOARD MEMBERS

*(This installation may be held during a Sunday morning service or other appropriate service just prior to the time when the newly elected officers shall assume their duties. The congregation may join in singing a hymn, such as: "A Charge To Keep I Have.")*

*(The pastor may read a Scripture lesson such as Acts 2:41-44 and 6:1-8. Depending upon the number of the officers involved, he/she may wish to read concerning their duties from the Book of Discipline. At the proper time, the minister shall call the newly elected officers before the congregation, and shall address them, saying:)*

Dear friends in Christ, it is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles that as the early church grew and the number of disciples multiplied, and the duties of the church diversified and increased, the church called its members together and chose men of good report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, to assist in the administering of the affairs of the church. The officers chosen were set before the apostles, who laid hands on them and prayed, setting them apart in the presence of the church to the duties of their honorable office.

In like manner this congregation, having first sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has chosen you to serve with persons in similar offices and with the pastor before whom you have now come for public consecration.

Therefore, we, the pastor and the people of this congregation call upon you to join in this pledge of faithfulness to Christ and His church.  
*(The pastor shall direct the elected officers to recite the Officers' Pledge:)*

### **The Officers' Pledge**

**Officers:** Trusting in Jesus Christ, the great Head of the church, I humbly promise that I will be faithful to the extent of my ability in all known duties and responsibilities devolving upon me as an officer of this church.

I will endeavor to be regular in attendance, cheerful in service, wholehearted in giving, open-minded in planning, patient in trials, persistent in difficulties, and Christ-like in fidelity to His service.

By precept and example, I will seek the promotion of Christian fellowship among all our members and the spreading of the message of full salvation at home and abroad.

**Pastor:** Do you cheerfully and willingly accept the obligations of this pledge?

**Officers:** I do.

*(Then the pastor shall address the congregation, asking them to stand, and say:)*

We, the pastor and officers of this church, call upon you, its members and friends, to join in this pledge of loyalty to those called of God and elected by the church as its leaders.

### **The Church's Pledge**

**Congregation:** Having chosen these officers to lead us in the administration of our church, we, its members and friends, do now pledge our cooperation to fulfill the assignments of witness and service we may be given. We acknowledge our duty and declare our determination to pray for all our leaders and to share with them in the responsibility of spreading the good news, thus hastening the coming of Christ.

**Pastor:** Do you cheerfully and willingly accept the obligations of this pledge?

**Congregation:** We do.

*(The officers shall then kneel at the altar while the pastor and people offer prayer on their behalf.)*

## INSTALLATION OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION STAFF

Prelude

Congregational Hymn

Pastoral Prayer

Special Music

Installation

*(Each new staff member and teacher comes forward with unlighted candle. The presiding pastor, addressing the staff shall say:)*

You have been elected to a responsible task. Yours is the God-appointed opportunity to lead others to higher and nobler attainments in their Christian lives. Some of you will present Christ for the first time to children and others. Your influence will help shape their decisions.

Your business is to love as God loves, to do little things as though they were great things, because of the humility and majesty of the Christ you represent.

Whatever gifts are yours, whatever talents are bestowed upon you, whatever abilities you have amount to nothing without love. Take up your work with cheerfulness. Your task may at times be tedious and demanding, but perform it with joy because you love Christ.

As you serve this church and this community, you serve God. Whatever reverence, dedication, planning, and diligent work you expend in performing your duty you render service to God as well as to people.

Response (in unison):

We trust in God for the wisdom and strength to accept this charge, to fulfill its requirements, and to walk in obedience as we endeavor to lead others in His way.

*(Following the response, the presiding pastor lights each candle of the staff members who have responded. As their candles are lighted, the staff members kneel at the altar.)*

Prayer of Dedication

*(Staff members arise, and face the congregation while the presiding pastor closes with the benediction:)*

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
The Lord make His face to shine upon you,  
And be gracious unto you.  
The Lord lift up the light of His countenance  
Upon you and give you peace. Amen.

## GROUND BREAKING

Invocation

Hymn

Scripture Reading (1 Chronicles 29:14-18)

Prayer

Introduction of Guests

Exhortation or Homily by the Pastor

Response by Chairman of the Board of Trustees

Ground breaking

*A number of people (such as charter or senior members, former and present pastors, church leaders, building committee, community leaders) by prearrangement may now participate by turning a shovel full of sod.*

Hymn

Benediction: "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11, NIV).

*(A ground breaking is newsworthy. The news media should receive an announcement and be invited to cover the event. If they choose not to attend, a news release should be submitted, telling of the event.)*

## CORNERSTONE LAYING

*(At the time and place of the laying of a cornerstone, the pastor will call the people to worship by announcing a hymn, preferably one well known to the people, unless hymnals are provided.)*

Hymn

Invocation

Assist us, O Lord, in all our doings, with Your most gracious favor, and further us with Your continued help that in all our works, begun, continued, and ended in You, we may glorify Your holy name, and finally, by Your mercy, obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(The pastor may continue in extemporaneous prayer followed by the Lord's Prayer.)*

Scripture Reading

1 Corinthians 3:9-16 or 1 Chronicles 29:10-17, Psalm 127:1 and 90:17.

*(The pastor, while standing by the stone, shall announce the articles which are to be placed in it. These may include a Bible, a hymnal, the Book of Discipline, current issues of Free Methodist periodicals, a document listing the name of the church with names of the pastor(s), trustees, building committee, members, and any other such items as are deemed appropriate. The stone shall then be laid by the pastor or the pastor's appointee, [usually with the assistance of a stone mason], and the pastor, placing a hand on the stone will say:)*

We lay this cornerstone of a house to be built and set apart from all worldly uses for divine worship in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*(Then may follow:)*

A Homily

Offering

The Doxology

Benediction or Closing Prayer



## MORTGAGE BURNING

Prelude

Invocation

Hymn of Praise

Reading of the Scriptures

Welcome

Special Music

Prayer *(to be read in unison)*

Almighty God, we give humble and hearty thanks for all Your goodness and loving-kindness to us. We thank You for this occasion in which we acknowledge Your kindness in supplying our temporal needs. Help us to show forth Your praise, not only with our lips, but in daily living by giving ourselves to the work of Christ through this church, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Introductions

Special Music

Address

*(A sermon on the subject of Christian stewardship is appropriate)*

Presentation of the Mortgage to the Presiding Pastor:

Trustees Litany

**Pastor:** Praise God for His mighty acts.

**Congregation:** Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

**Pastor and Congregation:** Being graciously prospered by God in lifting the burden of debt from this church, we now, with joy in our hearts and praise to God on our lips, are about to transform this mortgage, the symbol of our completed task, into the incense of prayer and thanksgiving.

**Pastor:** With love for our church and in reverent memory of all who by their faithful services and sacrifices through the years have given to us our spiritual heritage and physical property;

**Congregation:** We now proceed to burn this mortgage.

**Pastor:** With grateful appreciation for the generosity and faithfulness of members and friends, for the earnest labors and the untiring services and prayers of the officers of this church;

**Congregation:** We gratefully share in this experience.

**Pastor:** With a prayer that God shall continue to guide us with

wisdom, bless us with the spirit of unity, and inspire us to use our heritage, our property, and our every potential to lead persons to Christ and into the full blessing of the Spirit-filled life;

**Congregation:** We acknowledge that apart from Him we can do nothing.

**Pastor:** Rededicating ourselves to the work and support of this church, and to the extension through this church of the kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, throughout our community, our nation, and our world;

**Congregation:** We now burn this mortgage to the honor and praise of God.

*(Here the pastor lights the candle and ignites the facsimile of the mortgage or passes the lighted candle to a chosen person who ignites the facsimile. As this takes place, the pastor shall say:)*

**Pastor:** In recognition of God's sovereign will for us as His people, we do now burn this mortgage in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

The Singing of the Doxology

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Acknowledgments

Hymn

Benediction

Postlude

*(Be sure to handle the papers in a fireproof container to avoid anxiety or danger.)*