

# **BLESSING AND DEDICATION SERVICES**

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## Acknowledgements

Every effort has been made to ensure that the following list of acknowledgements is as comprehensive as possible, but the experience of those involved in the preparation of **The Methodist Worship Book** is similar to that of the compilers of the **Book of Common Order** of the Church of Scotland, who state:

Many sources have contributed to the compilation of this book, and not all of them are now traceable. Individual members of the Committee prepared drafts, which were revised more or less drastically by the Committee, often resulting in final versions which looked little like the original drafts. Among the casualties of this sometimes protracted process was the identity of many of the sources; they could not be recalled, nor did there seem to be any way to track them down. The Panel wishes to record at once both its indebtedness to any who may recognise in this book rhythms and patterns, expressions and phrases, ideas and images which are their own, and its regret that it became impossible to ask permission or seek consent for their inclusion...

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# BLESSING AND DEDICATION SERVICES

## INTRODUCTION

Throughout these services there runs the common theme that, for Christians, buildings can be places of celebration and light, of beauty, hope and joy.

### ***An Order for the Blessing of a Home***

Christians believe that in Jesus Christ, God comes to share and bless our daily life. Christians, and Jews before them, have always recognized the importance of the home in fostering and expressing faith. This service affirms that the home is a symbol of God's loving care to those who live within it and to those who enjoy their hospitality.

### ***An Order for the Laying of a Foundation Stone and An Order for the Dedication of a Church Building and its Furnishings***

From early days, Christians have set apart particular areas or buildings and dedicated them to the glory of God and for the use of God's people. It is a practice which is rooted in the Bible. The Temple in Jerusalem offers us the clearest example of a place specially built for worship, but we also see how the site of Jacob's dream at Bethel, the tent of meeting, and the synagogue are all 'sacred space'. At the same time, the Bible offers words of caution. God's presence is not confined to any building, nor should God's people presume that the provision of a sanctuary guarantees God's blessing and protection; faithful and obedient living is required.

Christians use a variety of buildings to help them as they worship and share in God's mission. Both these services may need adaptation to local circumstances and should always be used in ways which reflect the contribution of many skilled and devoted people to the realization of a building project.

# AN ORDER FOR THE BLESSING OF A HOME

1 The person leading the service, members of the household, and friends assemble at the home.

2 Peace be to this home and to all who dwell in it. **Amen.**

3 Let us pray.

God of truth and love, you make your home in our hearts and shelter us in the shadow of your wings. Be present with us as we ask your blessing upon this home. Assist our prayers and unite us in peace. Grant that *those who make their* home here may walk each day by the light of your Holy Spirit. Make this a place of joy, security and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

4 One or more of the following Psalms may be read or sung:

Psalm 23

Psalm 95:1-7

5 One or more of the following passages of scripture:

Genesis 18:1-8

Matthew 6:25-34

Luke 10:38-42

Luke 12:28-34

1 John 4:11-21

Revelation 21:1-7

## THE PRAYERS

6 Lord, bless this *house* and *N and N (N)* who *make it their* home. Defend it with your heavenly grace, and create within its walls a place of warmth, love and safety.

Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

May all who share the life of this household grow in wisdom and grace, and learn to love whatever is good and to rejoice in your creation.

Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

May all who enter this home find a welcome. May old friendships be strengthened and new friendships blossom and grow.

Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Comfort and sustain *N and N (N)* in times of stress or illness and give *them* patience and strength when trouble comes.

Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Let your presence fill this home. May it be a place of prayer and thanksgiving and a sign of your love in this neighbourhood.

Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

God of all, whose Son our Saviour made his home among us: grant that we may know his presence in our daily life together. We ask this in his name. **Amen.**

7 The Lord's Prayer

EITHER

We say together the prayer  
that Jesus gave us:

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily  
bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who  
sin against us.  
Save us from the time of  
trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom,  
the power and the glory  
are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.**

OR

As our Saviour taught his  
disciples, we pray:

**Our Father, who art in  
heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our  
daily bread.  
And forgive us our  
trespasses,  
as we forgive those who  
trespass against us.  
And lead us not into  
temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

8 Here some symbolic act may be made, such as the giving and receiving of a gift for the home, the lighting of a candle or lamp, or, if there is a garden, the planting of a tree or shrub. Further prayers may be said in particular rooms.

9 **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with us all evermore. Amen.**



# AN ORDER FOR THE LAYING OF A FOUNDATION STONE

## NOTES

- 1 It is appropriate to invite representatives of the wider connexion, of the local Christian community, and of other religious traditions to attend this service.
- 2 This order will need to be adapted at the places indicated by *italics* when it is used in respect of a building other than a place of worship.

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- 1 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with you all. **Amen.**
  - 2 A welcome is given.
  - 3 The minister or a representative of the congregation briefly describes the circumstances which led to the commitment to build on the site, and affirms the belief that the congregation is acting in obedience to God's will.
  - 4 One or more of the following passages from scripture:  
Ezra 3:10-11  
Psalm 43:3-5  
1 Corinthians 3:9-11  
Ephesians 2:14-22  
1 Peter 2:4-6  
Luke 6:46-49
  - 5 A sermon may be preached.

6 The person appointed lays the foundation stone, saying:

In faith, hope and trust we begin the building of *N Church* by laying this foundation stone in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

7 The minister says:

Almighty God,  
ruler of all things in heaven and on earth,  
giver of every good gift,  
inspire the building of this *church*  
and give us the wisdom and courage to complete it.  
Guide and protect all who will labour to construct this *church*,  
and grant that they may honour you in their work.  
May we be faithful stewards of everything you have  
entrusted to us,  
that this *church* may be a sign of your love to all the world,  
in the name of Jesus Christ,  
the chief corner stone of all things in heaven and on earth.  
**Amen.**

8 The Lord's Prayer

EITHER

We say together the prayer  
that Jesus gave us:

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily  
bread.**

**Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who  
sin against us.  
Save us from the time of  
trial**

OR

As our Saviour taught his  
disciples, we pray:

**Our Father, who art in  
heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our  
daily bread.**

**And forgive us our  
trespasses,  
as we forgive those who  
trespass against us.**

and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom,  
the power and the glory  
are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.

And lead us not into  
temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

9 This or some other appropriate act of commitment:

In the name of Jesus Christ,  
we commit ourselves to the building of this *church*,  
and we pledge our support and encouragement  
to all who labour for its completion.  
As we pray and work together,  
we offer all we do to the glory of God,  
for the service of the Church and the world,  
and for the coming of the kingdom.

All things come from you, O Lord.

**And of your own do we give you.**

Blessèd be the name of the Lord.

**The Lord's name be praised.**

10 The blessing of God,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
remain with *you/us* always. **Amen.**

11 Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
**In the name of Christ. Amen.**

# AN ORDER FOR THE DEDICATION OF A CHURCH BUILDING AND ITS FURNISHINGS

## NOTES

- 1 It is fitting that, when a building is set apart for holy use, the word of God should be preached and the Lord's Supper celebrated. If it is not considered practicable to include the Lord's Supper, it is desirable that this sacrament should be celebrated on the Sunday following.
- 2 The people may gather at some place outside the building and may move in procession to the building singing appropriate hymns, songs or psalms (Psalm 84 is especially appropriate for such a procession). Whether or not there is a procession, the people (or a group consisting of representative members of the local church, the presiding minister and other ministers and those involved with the planning, construction, and furnishing of the building) may assemble at the church door.

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1 **At the church door the following may be said:**

Cry out to the Lord, all the earth;  
serve the Lord with gladness;  
come into his presence with songs of joy.

**Be assured that the Lord is God;  
he has made us for himself.  
We are his own, his people,  
the sheep who feed on his pasture.**

Come into his gates with thanksgiving,  
enter his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and bless his name.

**Truly the Lord is good:  
his love endures for ever,  
and from age to age he is faithful.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
**as it was in the beginning, is now,  
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

2 We have come here today to dedicate this building for the worship and service of God in this community.

3 Let us pray.

Eternal God,  
to whose glory we dedicate this church:  
grant that all who enter here  
may find it to be none other  
than the house of God and the gate of heaven;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **THE PRESENTATION OF THE BUILDING**

4 One of those involved with the planning, construction, and furnishing of the building presents the key to a representative of the local church, saying:

We present to you this church building to be dedicated.

The representative replies:

We receive this church building to be dedicated to the glory of God and for the use of this community.

The presiding minister may say:

By what name is this church to be called?

The minister or another designated person answers with the name of the church.

## BLESSING AND DEDICATION

5 Let the door(s) of this church be open!  
May the love of Christ dwell within this house  
and may all who enter here find peace. **Amen.**

6 Hymn

If the people have assembled outside the building, they enter  
and take their places.

Any who have assembled at the church door take their places  
in the building.

## THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

7 One of the following or the Old Testament reading for the day  
is read:

Genesis 28:10-17  
1 Kings 8:22-30  
1 Chronicles 29:10-14  
Jeremiah 7:1-7

8 One of the following or the Psalm for the day is read:

Psalm 24:1-10  
Psalm 48:1-3, 9-14  
Psalm 93:1-5  
Psalm 122:1-9

9 One of the following or the Epistle for the day is read:

1 Corinthians 3:9-13, 16-17  
Ephesians 2:14-22  
Hebrews 10:19-25  
Revelation 21:1-7, 22-26

10 Hymn

- 11 One of the following or the Gospel for the day is read:

Matthew 7:24-27  
Matthew 16:13-18  
Matthew 21:10-14  
Luke 11:1-13  
John 4:19-26

- 12 Sermon

- 13 Hymn

## THE DEDICATION

- 14 The people stand. This or some other appropriate prayer is said:

Generous God, of your great goodness you have given your people the vision and skill to build this house of prayer. Bless this church. Here may the Gospel of Jesus Christ be proclaimed and made known in service and in fellowship. Here may the sacraments be celebrated with joy and reverence, and your people nurtured and strengthened in faith and hope and love. Here may the seeker find faith, the weak find courage, and the grieving find comfort. Lord, hear us when we pray to you in this house. May it be a place of peace to all who enter; a fortress against all hatred, envy, and pride; and a beacon to all who seek your presence.

In the Name of God the Father,  
who formed us in love and calls us by grace,

**we dedicate this church.**

In the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who draws us together in unity,

**we dedicate this church.**

In the Name of the Holy Spirit,  
who speaks in our hearts the words of eternal life,

**we dedicate this church.**

Generous God, of your great goodness you renew your people in their daily living. Bless this congregation. Empower us, on this day of dedication, for fresh ventures in faith, greater commitment to worship, and new acts of service.

**In the Name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit we dedicate ourselves in service and praise. Amen.**

15 The following prayers are said:

At the font or baptistry:

Living God, through water and the Spirit you give new birth to your people. Grant that all who are brought to the waters of Baptism may be reborn by the Holy Spirit and live the risen life of Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

At the pulpit or reading desk:

Heavenly Father, in your great mercy you have given us your holy Word. Grant that, in the reading of the Scriptures, the preaching of the word, and the prayers of your people, all who worship you in this church may hear your voice and respond to your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

At the communion table:

Father of all, whose Son Jesus Christ was born among us, and lived and died for our salvation: grant that all who are fed at this holy table may live in communion with him and each other and, at the last, share with all the saints in your heavenly banquet; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



- 16 One or more of the following may also be said after the prayer at the font or baptistry:

At the organ or other musical instrument(s):

Holy God, you have given us the gift of music that we may sing your praises and tune our hearts to the beauty of your love. Bless those who play and hear *this instrument* and grant that at the sound of *its* music we may worship you with joy and glorify your name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Other furnishings:

Lord our God, we thank you for all that you have given us to use in your service. In the faith of Jesus Christ we dedicate *this N . . .*, to the glory of your name. **Amen.**

- 17 Litany

Let us pray to God our Father through Jesus Christ our Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit.

We pray that God's presence may always be found in this place by all who turn to him:

When here we share our daily common life,

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, hear us.**

When your people gather here  
to seek your face  
and offer praise and prayer,

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, hear us.**

When here we celebrate new life  
in Baptism, in the breaking of bread,  
and in the faithful hearing of your word,

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, hear us.**

## BLESSING AND DEDICATION

When vows and commitments are made here  
in marriage  
and in our life of faith and service,

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, hear us.**

When here we commend your servants  
into your hands,  
to pass through death to you,

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, hear us.**

When we seek forgiveness and grace here,  
peace and reassurance,  
strength and consolation,

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, hear us.**

### Silence

Father of unending goodness,  
maker and builder of all,  
**sustain all that you have made.**

Jesus Christ,  
the sure foundation and cornerstone,  
**confirm our hope and trust in you.**

Holy Spirit,  
source of all skill and love and power,  
**inspire the work of our hands.**

To the living God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
**be all glory now and for ever. Amen.**

Go before us, Lord, in all that we do,  
with your most gracious favour,  
and guide us with your continual 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.**

18 **The Lord's Prayer**

**EITHER**

We say together the prayer  
that Jesus gave us:

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily  
bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who  
sin against us.  
Save us from the time of  
trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom,  
the power and the glory  
are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.**

**OR**

As our Saviour taught his  
disciples, we pray:

**Our Father, who art in  
heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our  
daily bread.  
And forgive us our  
trespasses,  
as we forgive those who  
trespass against us.  
And lead us not into  
temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

## BLESSING AND DEDICATION

- 19 When the Lord's Supper is celebrated, the service continues from the Preparation of the Gifts. Any appropriate order may be used, but that for ***The Day of Pentecost and Times of Renewal in the Life of the Church*** (page 174) is especially suitable.
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If the Lord's Supper is not celebrated, the service continues as follows:

- 20 Prayer of thanksgiving

Praise God,  
who has created us  
and given us hearts to worship him.

Praise God,  
who has sent us his Son, Jesus Christ,  
and given us a Gospel to proclaim.

Praise God,  
who has poured out the Holy Spirit upon us,  
and given us voices to sing his praise.

**Praise God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

- 21 Hymn

## BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

- 22 The blessing of God,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
remain with *you/us* always. **Amen.**
- Go in peace in the power of the Spirit  
to live and work to God's praise and glory.
- Thanks be to God.**