

Chapter 8 The Ritual

Baptism

¶8000 Adults and the parents or guardians of every child to be baptized shall have the choice of immersion, sprinkling or pouring.

We will on no account whatever make a charge for administering baptism.

Service of Infant Baptism

¶8010 *The pastor coming to the font, which is to be filled with pure water, shall say:*

Dear friends in Christ: God, through Moses, made covenant with Israel, saying to the people,

“These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up”¹

In the days of the New Covenant, Christ Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these”^{**} and on the Day of Pentecost the Apostle Peter declared, regarding the salvation given through Christ, “The promise is to you and to your children.”^{***}

It is therefore our privilege to present our children to the Lord and our duty to raise them in His ways. These parents now bring *this child* to offer *him/her* in dedication and to pledge in the presence of this congregation to bring *him/her* up in the Lord’s discipline and instruction.

Let us pray: Almighty and everlasting God, who has made saving covenant with Your people and who, out of Your loving-kindness, has ordained that they should live before

You in families; we thank You that it is our privilege to dedicate our children to You, in steadfast hope that they will cleave to Your covenant and live to Your glory. We entreat You for *this child* that *he/she* may be delivered from the power of sin and Satan and be set apart to You by the power of the Holy Spirit. We pray for these parents that they may be

¹Deuteronomy 6:6-7; ^{**}Matthew 19:14; ^{***}Acts 2:39

given divine aid, so that both by instruction and example they may lead *this child* in the way of everlasting life, and so all may come in unity together to Your eternal kingdom. We pray for this congregation, that we may faithfully discharge our duties to both parents and child, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Questions to parents

1. Do you, in the presence of God and this church, solemnly dedicate this child to the Lord?

Answer: We/I do.

2. Do you, so far as you are able on *his/her* behalf, renounce the devil and his works, the lure of the world and the sinful desires of fallen humanity, so that in the training of *this child* you will not be led by them and so that so far as you are able, you will keep *this child* from following them?

Answer: We/I do.

3. Will you faithfully strive by word and example to lead *this child* to personal faith in Christ?

Answer: We/I will.

4. Do you accept the authority of the Old and New Testaments?

Answer: We/I do.

5. Out of them, will you diligently teach *this child* the commandments and promises of the Most High

God, raising *him/her* in the discipline and instruction of the Lord?

Answer: We/I will.

The pastor will say:

Let us acknowledge our duty to strengthen this family with prayers and encouragement, thus aiding the parent(s) and child to fulfill all that has here been promised. The congregation will affirm this by standing.

The pastor shall take the child, and say:

Name this child.

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

Let us pray: O God, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, grant that this child may increase in wisdom and stature, growing in divine and human favor. So guide and uphold these parents that they may lead this child into that life of faith in Jesus Christ whose mark in this world is righteousness and in the world to come, everlasting bliss. May *he/she* be brought early to affirm in faith all that has here been pledged on *his/her* behalf, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Benediction: "Now to him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you without blemish before the presence of His glory with rejoicing, to the only God our Saviour through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and for ever. Amen."*

In the place of the second prayer, the pastor may offer an extemporaneous prayer, which will include the petitions set forth in the printed prayer.

*Jude 24-25, RSV

Service of Infant Dedication

¶8020 *The pastor shall say:*

Dear friends in Christ: God, through Moses made covenant with Israel, saying to the people, "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."*

In the days of the New Covenant, Christ Jesus said "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these"*** and on the Day of Pentecost the Apostle Peter declared, regarding the salvation given through Christ, "The promise is to you and to your children."****

It is therefore our privilege to present our children to the Lord and our duty to raise them in His ways. These parents now bring *this child* to offer *him/her* in dedication and to pledge in the presence of this congregation to bring *him/her* up in the Lord's discipline and instruction.

Let us pray: Almighty and everlasting God, who has made saving covenant with Your people and who, out of Your loving-kindness, has ordained that they should live before You in families; we thank You that it is our privilege to dedicate our children to You, in steadfast hope that they will cleave to Your covenant and live to Your glory. We entreat You for *this child* that *he/she* may be delivered from the power of sin and Satan and be set apart to You by the power of the Holy Spirit. We pray for these parents

that they may be given divine aid, so that both by instruction and example they may lead *this child* in the way of everlasting life, and so all may come in unity together to Your eternal kingdom. We pray for this congregation, that we may faithfully discharge our duties to both parents and child, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Deuteronomy 6:6-7; **Matthew 19:14; ***Acts 2:39

Questions to parents

1. Do you, in the presence of God and this church, solemnly dedicate *this child* to the Lord?

Answer: We/I do.

2. Will you endeavor to live a life before *this child* that will give witness to your faith in Jesus Christ?

Answer: We/I will.

3. Do you accept the authority of the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God?

Answer: We/I do.

4. Out of them, will you endeavor diligently to teach *this child* the commandments and promises of the Most High God, so that your child may early come to personal faith in Jesus Christ?

Answer: We/I will.

Then the pastor will say:

Let us acknowledge our duty to support this family with our prayers and encouragement, thereby aiding the parent(s) and child to fulfill all that has here been promised. The congregation will affirm this by standing.

The pastor shall then take the child in his arms and say:

Name this child. Even as Joseph and Mary brought Jesus in the time of His infancy to the temple to present Him to God, so now, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we present _____ in an act of dedication to God, with a prayer that at an early age in life he/she may experience His justifying and sanctifying grace. Amen.

Here the pastor shall pray an extemporaneous prayer on behalf of the parents and their child.

Service of Baptism for Children under Twelve

¶8030 In place of the questions asked to parents or guardians in ¶8010, the pastor may ask the following questions to candidates for baptism who are under 12 years of age.

Questions to candidate:

1. Is it true that you believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and that you are here to be baptized in His name?

Answer: Yes.

2. By being baptized today, do you agree that you want the world to know that you are a Christian and that you intend to live for Jesus all the days of your life?

Answer: Yes.

3. Do you believe that the whole Bible is God's word, provided for us to learn from and follow?

Answer: Yes.

4. Will you ask God to help you make good decisions, in order to avoid temptation and sin?

Answer: Yes.

5. Will you agree to attend and participate in the church as often as you can, to learn how to love God and love people?

Answer: Yes.

The Affirmation of Baptismal Vows

¶8040 *The pastor shall say:*

Dearly beloved, in your infancy your parents presented you at the altar of the church for the Sacrament of Baptism. That service was one of both dedication and consecration. Your parents dedicated you to the Lord and took vows on your behalf. They promised to teach you from the Word of God and to train you in the way that you should go.

God in His goodness has brought you to years of responsibility, and you now desire to acknowledge before God and His church the covenant then made on your behalf,

to profess your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to consecrate yourself to Him, and thereby to bind yourself anew to His service.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has said, "So every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven."*

Questions to be asked of those affirming their baptismal vows:

1. Do you confess your faith in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, and do you promise with the aid of the Holy Spirit to be Christ's faithful disciple to your life's end?

Answer: I do.

2. Have you read and considered the vows taken for you in baptism, and do you affirm them with a humble and contrite heart, putting your whole trust in the mercy of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?

Answer: I do.

3. Do you promise to make diligent use of the means of grace, to share faithfully in the worship and service of the church, to give of your substance as the Lord may prosper you, and to give your whole heart to the service of Christ and His kingdom throughout the world?

Answer: I do.

*Matthew 10:32

Service of Baptism for Adults

¶8050 *The pastor shall say:*

Dear friends in Christ: our faith declares that by the sin of Adam, the offspring of Adam are corrupted in their very nature, so that from birth they are inclined to sin; and that new life and a right relationship with God are possible only through the redemptive acts of God in Christ Jesus. Believing these declarations to be true, and in obedience to the command of Christ,

_____ (*name*) has come to make public confession that *his/her* sins have been washed away, and by means of baptism with water, to give sign of that inward washing and new life in Christ that are now *his/hers* by faith. We therefore implore you to pray that through this means of grace *he/she* may be further moved to keep covenant with God and so may *he/she* ever experience the constant washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

Then the pastor shall say:

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, whose covenant is firm and whose promises are always to be trusted, we call upon you for _____ (name) that he/she, coming to his/her baptism, may by this act give clear witness that he/she has received Your inner washing through faith in the cleansing blood of your Son, Jesus Christ. May he/she ever rejoice in the forgiveness of sins, the indwelling of Your Spirit, the fellowship of the church and the assurance of resurrection to glory in the world to come.

The pastor shall instruct the congregation to stand and then shall say:

Christ Jesus said, "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. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age"*

*Matthew 28:19-20

You, who present yourself for water baptism, have heard this congregation's prayers that God will continue His loving favor toward you and bring you to His eternal kingdom. And God, who keeps covenant, has promised by His only Son, who offered himself up for our redemption, to grant you these gracious favors. You must now promise, in the presence of this congregation, to keep covenant with Him, renouncing the life of sin, believing His Holy Word and obediently keeping His commandments.

The Apostles' Creed is to be used by the pastor as an introduction to the candidates' affirmation of their vows.

Let us all reaffirm our faith by proclaiming together the Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic* church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

*(A slightly different version of the Apostles' Creed may be found in the Pastors and Church Leaders Manual, Section IV p. 162. *Catholic refers to the universal church.)*

These questions are to be asked by the pastor to the candidates for baptism in the presence of the congregation.

1. Do you believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord?
2. Do you have the assurance that your sins are forgiven through faith in Jesus Christ?
3. Do you renounce Satan and his works?
4. Do you renounce the ungodliness of this world and all sinful desires?
5. Will you live in obedience to Christ?
6. Will you actively participate in the life and ministry of His church?
7. Do you accept the Old and New Testaments as the authority for your life?
8. Will you by this act of baptism testify to the world that you are a Christian?

Then the pastor shall baptize each candidate by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, as desired, saying:
_____ (name), I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

The pastor shall use this prayer, or substitute an extemporaneous one including the same petitions:
God, our Father, who gives to all who repent and believe the gospel the right to be called children of God, may Your grace ever be effectual in this, Your child. And may he/she enjoy the greater baptism of the Holy Spirit so that all sinful inclinations may be conquered by Your power and every Christian virtue may live and grow in him/her. Grant to him/her a place of service in the fellowship of Your church and may his/her witness in the world bring glory to Your holy name. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A benediction may be used if the service is ending.

Holy Communion: The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

General Directions

¶8100 Let all our ordained pastors exercise due care to see that no person known to be living an immoral life or to be guilty of any disreputable practice be admitted to the Lord's table among us until satisfactory evidence of repentance and amendment of life has been given.

All persons properly included in the general invitation may be allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper among us.

The officiating pastor may select lay assistants in the distribution of the elements. The use of individual communion cups is recommended, wherever practicable.

Alternate rituals printed in the *Pastors and Church Leaders Manual*, Appendix A, may be used. Sections marked with an asterisk may be used when an abbreviated service is desired.*

Order for the Administration of The Lord's Supper

¶8110

***The Invitation**

You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, who live in love and peace with your neighbors and who intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God and walking in His holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort; and humbly kneeling, make your honest confession to Almighty God.

The General Confession

The pastor may pray:

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all people, we confess that we have sinned, and we are deeply grieved as we remember the wickedness of our past lives. We have sinned against You, Your holiness and Your love, and we deserve only Your indignation and anger.

We sincerely repent, and we are genuinely sorry for all wrongdoing and every failure to do the things we should. Our hearts are grieved, and we acknowledge that we are hopeless without Your grace.

Have mercy upon us.

Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father, for the sake of Your son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, who died for us.

Forgive us.

Cleanse us.

Give us strength to serve and please You in newness of life and to honor and praise Your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***The Lord's Prayer**

The pastor may say:

Let us continue our confession as we pray together the prayer Jesus taught His disciples.

(To be prayed in unison)

"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us

our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."*

***The Affirmation of Faith**

The pastor may continue the prayer:

O Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who with great mercy has promised forgiveness to all who turn to You with hearty repentance and true faith, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from our sins, make us strong and faithful in all goodness and bring us to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Matthew 6:9-13, KJV

***The Collect**

The pastor may say:

Let us pray for inner cleansing.

(To be prayed in unison)

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love You and worthily magnify Your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Sanctus

The pastor may say:

It is always right and proper, and our moral duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty and Everlasting God.

Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the inhabitants of heaven, we honor and adore Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying,

(In unison)

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts!
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.
Glory be to Thee, O Lord, most high. Amen.

Then may be sung or recited:

The Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father
And to the Son
And to the Holy Ghost:
As it was in the beginning,
Is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen. Amen.

The Prayer for Spiritual Communion

The pastor may pray:

We do not come to this Your table, O merciful Lord, with self-confidence and pride, trusting in our own righteousness, but we trust in Your great and many mercies. We are not worthy to gather the crumbs from under Your table. But You, O Lord, are unchanging in Your mercy and Your nature is love; grant us, therefore, God of mercy, God of grace, so to eat at this Your table that we may receive in spirit and in truth the body of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, and the merits of His shed blood, so that we may live and grow in His likeness and, being washed and cleansed through His most precious blood, we may evermore live in Him and He in us. Amen.

***The Prayer of Consecration of the Elements**

The pastor may pray:

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who gave in love Your only Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption, who by His sacrifice, offered once for all, did provide a full, perfect, and sufficient atonement for the sins of the whole world, we come now to Your table in obedience to Your Son, Jesus Christ, who in His holy gospel commanded us to continue a perpetual memory of His precious death until He comes again. Hear us, O merciful Father, we humbly ask, and grant that we, receiving this bread and this cup, as He commanded and in the memory of His passion and death, may partake of His most blessed body and blood.

In the night of His betrayal, Jesus took bread, (*The pastor may take the bread in his/her hand.*) and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Take, eat; this is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."*

*Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24 and Luke 22:17-20, paraphrase

In like manner, after supper He took the cup, (*The pastor may lay hands upon the cups.*) and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of this, all of you, for this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins; do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."* Amen.

The pastor may first receive the communion, both the bread and the cup, and then give of the same to other pastors who may be present to assist in the service. After that the pastor shall give to the congregation the communion, both the bread and the cup.

When the bread is delivered, the pastor may say:

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed upon Him in your heart, by faith with thanksgiving.

When serving the cup the pastor may say:

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for you and be thankful.

If the consecrated bread or cup are used up before all have been served, the pastor should consecrate more by repeating the prayer of consecration. When all have communed the pastor shall return to the Lord's table and place upon it the consecrated elements that remain, covering the same with a white linen cloth. The pastor may then offer extemporaneous prayer, or speak briefly of the significance of the service, and conclude with a blessing.

The Benediction

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and may the

blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be yours now and forever. Amen.

*Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24 and Luke 22:17-20, paraphrase

The Solemnization of Matrimony

¶8200 We will not charge for leading a marriage ceremony. Honoraria may be accepted. Publication of banns shall be made by proclaiming the intended marriage openly, in an audible voice, during divine service, in some church, chapel or place of public worship of the religious body to which the pastor who is to solemnize the marriage belongs, situated within the local municipality parish, circuit or pastoral charge where at least one of the parties to the intended marriage has resided for the period of eight days immediately preceding, at one or more services according to the requirements of the local jurisdiction. (Extracted from the British Columbia Marriage Acts.)

The pastor shall declare during the church service:

I publish the banns of marriage between _____ of _____ (place) and _____ of _____ (place). If any of you know cause or just impediment why these two persons should not be joined together in holy matrimony you are to declare it.

¶8210 *At the time set, the man and woman to be married shall stand together facing the pastor, the woman on the man's left, and the pastor shall say:*

Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God and the presence of these witnesses to join together _____ and _____ in holy matrimony. Marriage is an honorable estate, instituted by God in the time of creation for the well-being of humankind. It is safeguarded by the laws of Moses, affirmed by the words of the prophets, and hallowed by the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. Marriage is a union close and enduring, a relationship in which a man and a woman forsake all others to become one flesh. This abiding union illustrates the holy relationship between Christ and His church. Marriage is therefore not to be entered into by any lightly, but reverently, soberly and in the fear of God.

Addressing the man and woman, the pastor shall say:

_____ and _____, I charge you both as you stand in the presence of God to remember that covenant love alone will avail as the foundation of

a happy and enduring home. Let Christ, who was loyal to His own unto death, be your example. Let the Apostle Paul be your teacher, who wrote: "Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."² If you keep this steadfast love ever before you and, remaining faithful to each other, resolutely endeavor to fulfill the vows you now will make, God's blessing will be upon you, and the home you establish will endure through life's every change.

The pastor shall say to the man, using his Christian name:

_____, will you have _____ to be your wedded wife, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep yourself only for her, so long as you both shall live?

The man shall answer: I will.

The pastor shall say to the woman, using her Christian name:

_____, will you have _____ to be your wedded husband, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, keep yourself only for him, so long as you both shall live?

The woman shall answer: I will.

The pastor shall say:

Who gives _____ to be married to _____?

The father of the woman, or whoever gives her in marriage, shall answer: I do.

The pastor, receiving the hand of the woman from her father or other sponsor, shall cause the man with his right hand to take the woman by her right hand, and say after the pastor:

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death us do part, and thereto I pledge you my faith.

²*1 Corinthians 13:4-7, paraphrase

They shall loose their hands, and the woman, with her right hand, shall take the man by his right hand, and shall likewise say after the pastor:

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death us do part, and thereto I pledge you my faith.

They again shall loose hands. The groomsman may give to the pastor a ring, which the pastor in turn will give to the groom, who will put it upon the third finger of the bride's left hand and, holding the ring, shall say after the pastor:

This ring I give you in token and pledge of our constant faith and steadfast love.

In case of a double ring ceremony, the pastor shall receive the other ring from the bridesmaid and shall deliver it to the woman to put upon the third finger of the man's left hand. The woman, holding the ring there, shall say after the pastor :

This ring I give you in token and pledge of our constant faith and steadfast love.

The pastor shall say:

Let us pray.

O Eternal God, creator and preserver of all people, giver of all spiritual grace, the author of everlasting life: send Your blessing upon this man and this woman whom we bless in Your name; that they, living faithfully together, may surely perform and keep the vow and covenant between them made, and may ever remain in perfect love and peace together, and live according to Your laws through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The pastor shall say:

Forasmuch as _____ and _____ have consented together in holy wedlock and have witnessed the same before God and this company and have pledged their faith each to the other and have declared the same by joining hands (and by giving and receiving a ring), therefore, by the authority granted to me as a minister of Jesus Christ, I pronounce that they are husband and wife together, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Those whom God has joined together, let not man put asunder. Amen.

The man and woman then kneel, and the pastor shall pray over them an extemporaneous prayer, prepared especially for the two of them.

The man and woman shall stand, and the pastor shall pronounce over them the following benediction:

Go forth into the world in peace. Be of good courage. Hold fast to that which is good. Render to no one evil for evil. Strengthen the faint hearted. Support the weak. Help the afflicted. Show honor to all. Love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you forever. Amen.

The Burial of the Dead

¶8300 We will not charge for funeral services. Honoraria may be accepted.

The Funeral Service

¶8310 The pastor may use this order of worship at the church or chapel.

The pastor may use opening sentences, such as:

“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.”*

“For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”**

Invocation:

O Eternal God, our Father, from whom we come and to whom we go, grant us the favor of Your divine presence at this time in our earthly pilgrimage; assure us by Your Spirit that the one we serve, even Jesus, has conquered death and is alive forevermore; enable us to view our temporal lives in the light of the eternal; and so may our spirits grow calm and our vision clear. Through Christ we pray. Amen.

Hymn by the congregation, musicians, or organist
(Optional)

Obituary and/or Tributes (Optional)

Old Testament Scriptures, such as: Psalms 23, 90, 121

New Testament Scriptures, such as: John 14:1-6;

1 Corinthians 15:35-49; 2 Corinthians 5:1-5

Hymn by the congregation, musicians or organist
(Optional)

Meditation

Prayer for the family and community

Benediction (not used if the service is to continue at the graveside)

The pastor shall at the appropriate time at the cemetery say:

"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."*

"For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him, with my own eyes" **

"For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it."***

"The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised."****

This may also be used at the cemetery.

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.

"Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?'

"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'*****

Then the pastor shall say:

Inasmuch as Almighty God, in His wise providence, has taken out of this world our deceased brother (sister, or child), we therefore commit this mortal body to

*John 11:25-26, RSV; **Job 19:25-27; ***1 Timothy 6:7; ****Job 1:21; *****John 14:1-6

the ground, looking for the general resurrection in the last day and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose Second Coming in glorious majesty to judge the world, the earth and the sea shall give up their dead; and the corruptible bodies of those who sleep in Him shall be changed, and made like unto His own glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto himself.

The pastor may pray extemporaneously or use The Collect.

O merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life, in whom whosoever believeth shall live though he die, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall not die eternally, we meekly beseech You, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, that when we shall depart this life we may rest in Him, and at the general resurrection on the last day may be found acceptable in Your sight and receive that blessing which Your well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all who love and fear You, saying, "Come, you blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world."* Grant this, we beseech You, O merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

Benediction

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.

*Matthew 25:34, paraphrase

Ordination of Elders

¶8400 *The secretary shall present the ordinands to the president, saying:*

I present to you these persons (*reading the names aloud*) to be ordained elder in the Free Methodist Church.

Then the president shall say to the congregation:

Dear friends in Christ: All persons who belong to Jesus Christ are called to minister His reconciling work through the church. But to lead the church, our Lord calls particular believers to shepherd the people, teach doctrine, administer the sacraments and keep order. Each person who stands before you testifies to such an inward call of the Holy Spirit to the work of an elder.

God calls men and women, but the church examines them so as to confirm the presence of spiritual gifts and personal graces. These persons who stand before you have been so examined and affirmed by conference leaders for ordination.

When people are set apart for this leadership responsibility, they are ordained by the laying on of hands. Paul remembered this moment in his counsel to Timothy when he said: "I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands."³

Whether elders serve as pastors, teachers, missionaries, chaplains or in unique combinations of these vocations, they provide Spirit-filled leadership. In fulfilling the Great Commandment to love the Lord our God and to love others, and in fulfilling the Great Commission to go into all the world to make disciples, elders are God's gift to the church.

Pastoral leadership focuses on developing healthy, biblical communities of holy people. These communities multiply disciples, mentor leaders, create new groups and plant new churches. Such Spirit-filled leadership requires vision and courage to move people to obey the Word of God and increase His church.

Rooted in a deep love for Christ and sharing His compassion for people, Free Methodist elders help create congregations that are fervent in prayer, enthusiastic in worship, holy in lifestyle, insistent for justice, caring for the poor, and reaching out locally and globally to bring all people into relationship with Jesus Christ.

³2 Timothy 1:6, RSV

The Collect

Almighty God, the giver of all good gifts, who by Your divine providence appointed various orders in Your church: Give Your grace we humbly pray, to these persons now called to the Order of Elders. So replenish them with the truth of Your doctrine and endue them with holiness of life that they may faithfully serve before You to the glory of Your great name and to the benefit of Your holy church, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever. Amen.

The Old Testament - Isaiah 6:1-8

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: with two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another:

‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory.’

“At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. ‘Woe to me!’ I cried. ‘I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!’

“Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, ‘See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.’ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’”

The Epistle - 1 Timothy 4:11-16

“Command and teach these things. Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

“Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.”

The Gospel – John 10:11-18

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me – just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life – only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

The president shall say:

Dear friends in Christ, *(The ordinands may be called by name; and the president shall say to them:)*

Each of you has heard in the lessons taken from the Scriptures what dignity and importance belong to this office to which you are called. We have good hope that you have considered these things and that you have clearly determined, by God’s grace, to give yourself completely to the fulfillment of your call. It is our hope that with all your strength you will apply yourself wholly to this one thing and direct all your concerns and studies in this direction. May you continually pray to God the Father, by the mediation of our only Saviour, Jesus Christ, for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that by daily reading and weighing of the Scriptures you may grow stronger and more mature in your ministry. May you endeavor repeatedly so to sanctify the lives of you and yours and to fashion them after the rule and doctrine of Christ so that you may be wholesome and godly examples for the people to follow.

And now, so that this congregation of Christ, here assembled, may also understand your mind and will in these things, and that your promise may all the more move you to fulfill your office, you shall answer plainly these questions which, in the name of God and His church, we ask.

Questions for Elders

1. Do you confidently believe that you are called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, to serve His church as an elder?

Answer: I so believe.

2. Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain all doctrine necessary for eternal salvation; and out of these Scriptures are you determined to instruct the people committed to your care, teaching nothing as necessary to salvation except what can be concluded from or proved by the Scriptures?

Answer: I am.

3. Will you then faithfully give diligence always so to minister the doctrines and sacraments and discipline of Christ, as the Lord has commanded?

Answer: I will do so by the help of the Lord.

4. Will you be ready with faithful diligence, to banish all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word; and will you use both public and private warnings and exhortations both to the converted and unconverted as need shall require and occasion be given?

Answer: I will, the Lord being my helper.

5. Will you be diligent in prayers, the reading of the Holy Scriptures and whatever study shall enrich your knowledge of the same?

Answer: I will do so, the Lord being my helper.

6. Will you diligently regulate and pattern your life (and that of your family) according to the doctrine of Christ so as to make (both) yourself (and them), as far as you are able, wholesome example(s) and pattern(s) for the flock of Christ?

Answer: I will be diligent to do so, the Lord being my helper.

7. Will you practice and encourage, so far as you are able, quietness, peace and love among all Christian people and especially among those who are committed to your care?

Answer: I will do so, the Lord being my helper.

8. As an elder of the Free Methodist Church, and in keeping with the Holy Scriptures, will you respect and be guided by those in authority over you?

Answer: I will do so, the Lord being my helper.

The ordinands shall kneel, the elders shall be called forward for the laying on of hands, and the president shall say:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, of Your infinite love and goodness You have given us Your only and dearly beloved son, Jesus Christ, our redeemer and the author of everlasting life. To You we render most hearty thanks. We praise and worship You, and we humbly pray that we may continue always to be thankful for these and all Your other benefits to us. May we daily increase and go forward in the knowledge and faith of Him who died for us, who rose from death and even now lives to make intercession for us. May Your holy name be forever glorified and Your blessed kingdom enlarged, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

The president and the elders present shall lay their hands upon the head of each of them and the president, addressing each by name shall say:

The Lord pour upon you the Holy Spirit for the office and work of an elder in the Free Methodist Church now committed unto you by the laying on of our hands. Amen.

They shall continue to kneel and the president shall deliver the Bible to each one of them in succession and shall say:

Take authority to minister the Word of God. Faithfully proclaim His Word, declare His forgiveness, celebrate the sacraments, shepherd His people.

Closing Prayer

Most merciful Father, we beseech You to send upon these, Your servants, Your heavenly blessings, that they may be clothed with righteousness and that Your Word spoken by their mouths may have success. Grant us also that we may have grace to hear and receive what they shall deliver out of Your most Holy Word, or shall speak in agreement with the same, as the means of our salvation. May we, in all our words and deeds, seek Your glory and the increase of Your kingdom through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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 name and finally, by your mercy, obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Benediction

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessings of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. Amen.

The president will present credentials to each and offer congratulations.

Consecration of Deacons

¶8500 The service may be either a special service with appropriate music and preparation, or as a part of a Sunday worship service.

The pastor or designee shall present to the superintendent the one who is (those who are) to be consecrated, saying:

Superintendent _____ (name), I present to you _____ (name or names) to be consecrated deacon in the _____ (name of church), a Free Methodist Congregation.

The superintendent shall say to the pastor:

Have you diligently examined *this person/these persons*, whom you present to us, to be capable and qualified? *Has he/she/Have they* prepared *himself/herself/themselves* educationally and spiritually, so that *his/her/their* life and ministry will bring honor to God and edify His church?

The senior pastor shall respond:

He has/She has/They have been so examined and we believe *him/her/them* to be a *person/persons* God has called to be a consecrated *deacon/deacons* in this church.

The superintendent shall say to the congregation:

Dear friends in Christ: We purpose, God willing, to consecrate as a deacon *this person/these persons* who *stands/stand* before you. *He has/She has/They have* been examined and *has/have* been found to be a *person/persons* called by God to this ministry and suited for the same. We ask you, people of God, to declare your assent to the consecration of *this person/these persons*.

Do you trust that *he is/she is/they are* worthy, by God's grace, to be consecrated?

People: We do. Thanks be to God.

Superintendent:

Will you uphold *him/her/them* in *his/her/their* ministry?

People: With God's help, we will.

Superintendent:

Let us stand together as we pray in unison the prayer our Lord taught us to pray:

People: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Superintendent:

You may be seated.

Superintendent continues in prayer with The Collect:

Let us pray: Almighty God, who appointed ministers in Your church and inspired Your apostles to consecrate as deacon Your first martyr, Stephen, with others; look with mercy upon *this, Your servant/these, Your servants*, whom You have called to the same order and administration; may *he/she/they* be replenished with the truth of Your doctrine and adorned with blamelessness of life, so that both by word and good example, *he/she/they* may serve You faithfully; so may Your name be glorified and Your church built up, through the merits of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

The superintendent may assign readers:

Mark 10:42-45 (NRSV)

“So Jesus called them and said to them, ‘You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.’”

1 Timothy 3:8-13 (NRSV)

“Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money; they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them first be tested; then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons. Women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but

temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be married only once and let them manage their children and their households well; for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.”

1 Peter 4:10-11 (NIV)

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. If you speak, you should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If you serve, you should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”

The superintendent shall then say to the candidate(s):

My brother/sister/brothers and sisters you are to be consecrated to the ministry of deacon in this church.

God has called you to represent to the church the ministry of servanthood in the world, a ministry to which all Christians are called in baptism, but to which you are called in a special way. You are to be a co-worker with your pastor(s) (and other deacons), serving this congregation in the area of your gifting and calling. In the name of Jesus Christ you are to serve all people, particularly the poor, the sick, and the oppressed. You are to interpret to the church the needs, concerns and hopes of the world. At all times, by your life and teaching you are to show Christ’s people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ.

So that we may know that you believe *yourself/yourself* to be called by God and that you profess the Christian faith, we ask you the following questions:

1. Do you believe you are inwardly moved by the Holy Spirit to take upon you the ministry of a deacon in this church, to serve God, promoting His glory and edifying His people?

Answer: I so believe.

2. Are you persuaded that the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain all things necessary for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and are the inspired and authoritative standard for the church’s faith and life?

Answer: I do so believe and am persuaded.

3. Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and do you accept the beliefs and teachings of the Christian faith?

Answer: I do so confess and accept, by the grace of God.

4. Will you be faithful in prayer, in the reading and study of the Holy Scriptures, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, continually rekindle the gift of God that is in you?

Answer: I will, with the help of God.

5. Will you apply all diligence to regulate and fashion your own life (and the lives of your family) according to the doctrine of Christ; and to make (both) yourself (and them), as far as you are able, wholesome example(s) of the flock of Christ?

Answer: I will do so, the Lord being my helper.

6. Deacons express their ministry under the guidance and authority of an elder, being faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ as they participate in the life and work of the church. Will you do this gladly and willingly?

Answer: I will do so, the Lord being my helper.

7. Will you be loyal to The Free Methodist Church, accepting its polity, doctrine and discipline?

Answer: I will, with the help of God.

May God, who has given you the will to do these things, give you grace to perform them, that the work begun in you may be brought to completion. Amen.

Laying on of Hands and Prayer

The superintendent says to the congregation:

As this person is/these persons are consecrated by God and the church for the ministry of deacon, to which we believe he/she/they have been called by the Holy Spirit, let us silently pray for him/her/them as they kneel before God.

The candidates kneel.

The people pray for them in silence.

The superintendent addresses the candidate(s):

My brother/sister/brothers and sisters, from the time of the apostles, persons with suitable gifts and graces have been set apart by the laying on of hands and prayer for a ministry of service in the church of Jesus Christ our Lord. We trust that the Spirit of God has called you to the ministry of deacon. As earnest prayer is made for the fulfillment of

the Spirit's gift in you, your church now calls you to receive the laying on of hands as the seal of your vocation by the Spirit.

The superintendent (and other elders, as well as consecrated deacons who may be present), laying hands upon the head of each candidate in turn, shall say:

Take authority to execute the office of a deacon in this congregation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

After all have received the laying on of hands, the superintendent facing the candidates, with both hands extended over them, says:

Let us pray. We give thanks to you, Lord God, that in your great love you sent Jesus Christ, your only begotten, to take the form of a servant for the sake of us all, becoming obedient even to death on the cross. We praise You that You have highly exalted Jesus Christ Your servant whom You have made to be Lord of all, and that You have taught us, by His word and example, that whoever would be great among us must be servant of all. Increase within the lives of these your servants the gift of the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ your Son, for the ministry of a deacon in Your church. Give them grace to be faithful to their promises, constant in their discipleship and always ready for the works of loving service. Make them modest and humble, gentle and strong that, having the assurance of faith and rejoicing in hope, they may be rooted and grounded in love. Give them a share in the ministry of Jesus Christ, who came not to be served but to serve; who now lives and reigns with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Recognition and a Bible or other gift may be given to each deacon.

The superintendent addresses the deacon:

We now welcome you to your ministry as deacon. You have given assurance of your faith and Christian experience. You have confirmed the vows of your consecration and committed yourself to uphold faithfully the Free Methodist Church. We rejoice that you have been called to serve among us, and pray that the Spirit of God may guide your ministry.

Presenting each deacon with his or her credentials, the superintendent says:

_____ (name), We now recognize you as a deacon in the _____
(name of church), a Free Methodist Congregation.

Benediction

Dedication of Churches

¶8600 After the congregation has assembled, an appropriate hymn shall be sung. This is to be followed by an extemporaneous prayer and scripture readings.

Old Testament scripture Psalm 84.

New Testament scripture Hebrews 10:19-25.

An appropriate hymn may be sung.

The pastor shall deliver a sermon suitable to the occasion.

An offering may be received.

One of the trustees shall say to the pastor:

We present unto you this building, to be dedicated as a church for the service and worship of Almighty God.

The pastor shall request the congregation to stand, as he/she repeats this declaration:

Dearly beloved, it is meet and right, as we learn from the Holy Scriptures, that houses erected for the public worship of God should be specially set apart and dedicated to religious uses. For such a dedication we are now assembled. With gratitude, therefore, to Almighty God, who has signally blessed His servants in their holy enterprise of erecting this church, we dedicate it to His service, for the reading of the Holy Scriptures, the preaching of the Word of God, the administration of the holy sacraments and for all other exercises of religious worship and service, according to the *Book of Discipline* and usages of the Free Methodist Church.

A dedicatory prayer shall be offered.

Ministerial Membership

Local Ministerial Candidate

¶8700

- A. Questions for a local ministerial candidate before the local Board of Administration:
1. When and how did you come to know Christ as Savior and Lord?
 2. Describe your life as it relates to the fullness of the Holy Spirit. -
 3. Describe the call of God in your life to full-time ministry. -
 4. What preparations and plans are you making in order to follow God's will for your life?
 5. What do you see as your primary spiritual gifts? -
 6. In what ways do you plan to witness and minister as a local ministerial candidate?
- B. Questions for a local ministerial candidate before the congregation:

1. Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and do you offer yourself in service to Him as a local ministerial candidate in the _____ Free Methodist Church?

Answer: I do.

2. Recognizing that being a local ministerial candidate in this congregation is an important step in confirming the call of God on your life, do you pledge to diligently seek the Lord's will for your life through prayer and study?

Answer: I do.

3. Will you seek and accept the guidance of your pastor and the local Board of Administration in order to fulfill these goals?

Answer: I will.

- C. The pastor will present a certificate to the local ministerial candidate.

Conference Ministerial Candidate

¶8710 *At an appropriate time the conference ministerial candidate(s) shall be called before the annual conference or the Administrative Committee if so authorized by the annual conference, and the chair shall say:*

The leaders and members of this annual conference, having observed your Christian life and conduct, feel you are endowed with the gifts of ministerial leadership. The Ministerial Education and Guidance Board has carefully inquired into your qualifications and has presented you as a candidate for membership. We offer our words of encouragement and congratulations. We know you take seriously this step towards ordination. We expect you to give yourself diligently in prayer and study in preparation for effective pastoral ministry. That you may fix your eyes more clearly upon your goal we ask you the following questions:

1. Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and offer yourself in service to Him as a conference ministerial candidate in the _____ Annual Conference of the Free Methodist Church?

Answer: I do.

2. Recognizing that being a conference ministerial candidate in this annual conference is an important step toward full membership and ordination, do you pledge to equip yourself spiritually, morally, and intellectually for the Christian ministry?

Answer: I do.

3. Will you seek and accept the guidance of your superintendent and the Ministerial Education and Guidance Board to fulfill these goals?

Answer: I will.

The president of the conference shall present a certificate to the newly received conference ministerial candidate(s).

Member of the Annual Conference

¶8720 *The conference ministerial candidate seeking to become a full member of the annual conference shall answer these questions:*

1. Have you faith in Christ?

Answer: I do

2. Have you present assurance that your sins are forgiven?

Answer: I do

3. Do you experience purity of heart and life and empowerment for service, through the fullness of the Spirit, and will you continue to grow in this experience and so lead your people?

Answer: Yes.

4. Are you resolved to devote yourself to God and the work to which He calls you, expressing Christian love?

Answer: As God is my helper, I am so resolved.

5. Will you partake of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper when it is offered?

Answer: I will.

6. Will you endeavor to effectively communicate the gospel?

Answer: I will, God being my helper.

7. Will you see that all people under your care are disciplined to be obedient followers of Jesus Christ?

Answer: I will.

8. Will you visit, ministering to those within and without the church?

Answer: I will.

9. Will you recommend fasting and prayer, both by teaching and example?

Answer: I will.

10. Will you endeavor to fulfill the mission and vision of the Free Methodist Church and its ministries in building the kingdom of God?

Answer: I will, God being my helper.

Lay Membership

Adult Membership

¶8800 *Those who are to be received into membership shall be called forward by name, 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 local Board of Administration, come to be welcomed into 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 society.

Addressing those seeking admission, the pastor shall say:

Beloved in the Lord, you have been baptized into Christ and come now to be received into membership in the Free Methodist Church. We rejoice with you in all God's mercies that have brought you to this hour; and we join our prayers with yours as you make this sacred undertaking.

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

Answer: I do.

2. Do you believe the Bible is God's written Word, uniquely inspired by the Holy Spirit and do you accept its authority for what you must believe and how you must live?

Answer: I do.

3. Do you here resolve, by God's grace, to be Christlike in heart and life, opening yourself fully to the cleansing and empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit, the guidance of the Scriptures, and the nurture and fellowship of the church?

Answer: By God's enabling grace, I do resolve.

4.+Do you accept the Articles of Religion, the Membership Covenant, the goals for Christian conduct and the government of the Free Methodist Church, and will you endeavor to live in harmony with them?

Answer: Trusting God's power to aid me, I do.

5. As a follower of Jesus Christ, will you embrace the mission of the Free Methodist Church within and beyond this congregation and will you join us in giving sacrificially of your time, talents and resources to help us carry out that mission?

Answer: With God's help, I will.

6. I offer you the right hand of fellowship. I welcome you into The Free Methodist Church. May the experience of membership in this body enrich your life and the life of our church; and may your contribution to its life strengthen both you and all of us.

The pastor shall introduce each candidate by name 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.)

The pastor may offer an extemporaneous prayer.

(Optional) 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.

The pastor shall 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.

Preparatory Membership

¶8810 Instructions related to the optional use of preparatory membership are found in the *Pastors and Church Leaders Manual*, Section V.

Youth Membership

¶8820 Ritual other than questions and answers is optional.

Those who are to be received as youth members shall be called forward by name, 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: Yes.

2. Have you received Christian baptism? If not, are you willing to be baptized?

Answer: Yes.

3. Will you attend classes of instruction on living the Christian life and serving God through your church?

Answer: Yes.

4. Can the Free Methodist Church count on you? Will you pray for the church, attend regularly, give to your church and help wherever you can?

Answer: Yes.

5. Will you show your friends by the way you live what it means to be a Christian and will you try to win them to Christ?

Answer: Yes.

The pastor may offer an extemporaneous prayer. (Optional) Those to be received as youth members shall kneel, and the pastor, laying his 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.

Membership by Transfer

¶8830 *Those who are to be received into membership by transfer shall be called forward by name and the pastor, addressing the congregation, shall say:*

The Free Methodist Church is a welcoming fellowship which provides a home for those committed to the advancement of Christ's kingdom. We count it a privilege to receive these members into our fellowship by transfer. Their letters of transfer read:

The pastor shall read only the first letter in each category of membership in its entirety. The others can be named along with the name of the church from which they are transferring.

The pastor shall lead in an extemporaneous prayer.

The pastor shall welcome each new member.

Members transferring from another evangelical denomination must previously have met the requirements of ¶6110.