

Equipping for ...

A Litany for the Commissioning of a Search Committee

When a congregation seeks to call a new minister, the presbytery appoints an interim moderator to guide the process. The session, led by the interim moderator, appoints congregational members to a search committee. These individuals will be passionate about serving God's mission and willing to devote the time necessary to consider the congregation's vision for the future, the qualities of the new minister needed to realize the vision, and the assessment and ranking of all applicants. This commissioning liturgy reminds both search committee members and the congregation at large that discerning God's will for all involved is the primary goal. Search committee members are called for this important work.



The Liturgy

The members of the search committee are invited to come forward.

The interim moderator or designate introduces the commissioning of the search committee with an explanation of the procedures in the search for a minister in the PCC. It may also be appropriate to explain the role and responsibilities of the search committee as well as some important features of the process.

Opening Sentences

Opening sentences may be selected from *Living Faith*, particularly sections 6 or 7, such as:

- One:** The church is Christ together with his people.
The church lives to praise God.
- All:** **We have no higher calling than to offer the worship that belongs to God day by day, Sunday by Sunday.**

(7.1.1 and 7.3.1)



OR

One: The church is present
when the Word is truly preached,
the sacraments rightly administered,
and as it orders its life
according to the word of God.

(7.1.6)

Prayer

Loving and giving God, through the centuries
you have sustained the church.

In good times and difficult,
in passion and in apathy,
through periods of prosperity and struggle,
confidence and uncertainty,
influence and weakness,
you have graced your church with leadership.

We thank you for Christ and his pattern of living
and ministry and that in all times you have
drawn individuals together and formed them
into a worshipping bodies, making your church an
expression of your love in the world.

In glad thanksgiving,
we praise you for the ways we experience your
loving care in this congregation.

We are grateful for the worship of the faithful,
the love expressed in service and the strength of
our leadership.

In this time of transition, we are grateful for your
Spirit's gentle and clarifying guidance and
wisdom. For the good you would have this
congregation achieve now and in the future, we
are eager to work towards fulfilling. For your
vision of who we can become, we thank you and
pray that we see clearly your will for us.

Keep us mindful in the months ahead that your
hand is upon us. Clarify our vision in the light of
the gospel, foster courage among us to face the
challenges of our time with hope, deepen our
dedication so our faith and life together may
flourish, and let it all be done for your glory.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray.
Amen.

Vows

Hear what *Living Faith* says about Christ's ministry
done in the world through us:

The Lord continues his ministry
in and through the church.

All Christians are called
to participate in the ministry of Christ.

As his body on earth
we all have gifts to use
in the church and in the world
to the glory of Christ, our King and Head.

7.2.1

Through the church God orders this ministry
by calling some to special tasks
in the equipping of the saints
for the work of ministry,
for building up the body of Christ.

7.2.2

Questions to the Search Committee:

You have been chosen from within this congregation
and affirmed by the session. You have agreed to jointly
discern God's regarding who might serve
_____ (name of congregation) as Minister
of Word and Sacraments and Teaching Elder.

Do you accept this responsibility?

Answer: We do, God being our helper.

Leader: God bless you as you undertake this
important work.

Do you promise in the strength and grace of Jesus
Christ of to make faithful use of wisdom, insight,
research, courage and prayer?

Answer: We do, God being our helper.

Leader: God bless you as you undertake this
important work.

Questions to the Congregation:

These people have been chosen from within this
congregation and affirmed by the session as your
representatives in the search for a new minister. They
will discern God's will together regarding who might
serve as minister.



Do you promise to pray regularly for the members of the search committee that they have the courage, wisdom and strength to complete this responsibility for the good of God's Kingdom?

Answer: We do, God being our helper.

Leader: God bless you in this time of transition.

Prayer:

Loving God, thank you for these people who have accepted the responsibility to seek a minister for this congregation. We ask your blessing on them; guide their meetings, decisions and their search. Keep them open to each other, to the members of this community and to your will. Nurture patience among this group and let them follow the leading of your Spirit with deep trust.

We pray for the individual who will become our minister. We thank you for that person's passion for faith, trust in you, care for the traditions of the church, gifts of creativity, training, skills and pastoral gifts. And prepare our hearts to accept change and transformation. We offer our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, the only King and Head of the church. Amen.

The members of the search committee return to their places.

Sermon Themes

Possible Scripture Reading for the Service:

Acts 16:1-10

Possible Sermon Theme:

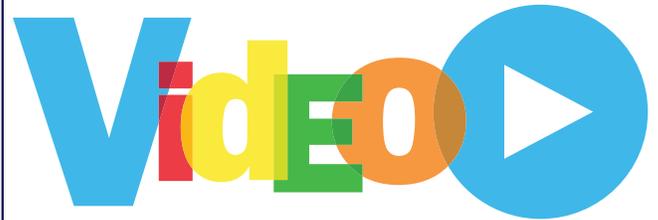
These verses recount the period of time when Paul and Timothy began to work together. Initially they had success as they strengthened God's church but this time was followed by a period of seeming failure when all the doors were closed. They wandered aimlessly, getting nowhere. We can imagine that this was difficult, frustrating and discouraging for Paul and Timothy. Eventually God spoke in a dream and they were led to Macedonia where work awaited them.

Energy for leadership in the church resides in God's intent. Frustrations and closed doors are part of the experience of grace. They deepen our yearning for God and make us open to a new vision. Such times lead individuals and congregations away from the distraction of many possibilities to focus on God's particular call to serve in particular ways and places. Emptiness can provide the space where vision can be grasped. Hope

resides in God's faithfulness and in believers openness to the uncomfortable but life giving experience of change so they can be led to fruitful service.

This material is available online at presbyterian.ca/worship

Worship Resources



Worship leaders are increasingly looking for effective and high-quality video resources to use in worship or Bible studies that are covered by copyright. In addition to the PCC Worship web page (presbyterian.ca/worship), the following three sites are helpful to consult for a broad range of resources.

Sermon Spice

sermonspice.com



Worship House

worshiphousemedia.com



The Work Of The People

theworkofthepeople.com

(This site also offers quotes and interviews from well-known preachers and authors)

