**Orders**

**for**

**Church Courts**

**The Opening of A Court**

According to The Book of Forms, each meeting of a court of the church is to be opened by the moderator who takes the chair at the appointed time and constitutes the court with prayer. The prayers below are offered as models and may be adapted with words appropriate to the occasion.Any sederunt of a session, presbytery, synod or General Assembly may begin with one of the following or a similar prayer.

**Prayer And Declaration**

*When the moderator has taken the chair, the members of the court will stand. The moderator will constitute the court with prayer, saying:*

O Lord, our God,

How great is your name in all the earth!

Yet in your gracious mercy,

you have come to us and redeemed us

through your Son,

Jesus Christ our Lord.

You have called us to be your children,

a royal priesthood,

a holy nation

your own people.

By your Spirit, you have been with your people

and faithful to your covenant with them

in all generations.

We give you thanks, O God, our Creator and Redeemer.

By your Spirit,

you have baptized us into one holy church

to be siblings in Christ.

Teach us

to love one another,

to forgive one another,

to serve one another,

so that in all we say and do,

we may have the same mind that was in Christ Jesus,

and proclaim him to the world,

to the glory of your name.

As we meet together, give to us

clarity of mind,

quietness of spirit,

integrity of purpose,

that all we do may be according to your will.

*Intercessions suitable for the season or circumstances current within the jurisdiction of the court may be added in the following or similar words.*

Be with those who are ill and those who are facing death.

May they find peace and healing in the certain knowledge that nothing can separate them from your love in Christ Jesus.

Be with those who are in the midst of conflict.

Endow them with humility, truth, courage and compassion. May the power of your gracious love heal divisions, forgive offences and restore your people to unity in Christ.

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We pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

to whom with you and the Holy Spirit,

belongs all honour and glory,

now and forever.  **Amen**.

*The moderator will declare:*

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I declare this \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_duly constituted and competent to do any business which may come before it.

**OR**

Lord of the church:

you have called us to be the people of God in the world

and to give to you our offerings of praise and service.

Hear us as we pray for this court of your church

and for the people who have come here to serve you,

to worship you

and to celebrate your presence among them.

Grant that what is done in this place today

may be for the good of your church

that your will may be done,

that your name may be glorified,

that your saints may be equipped to live faithfully in the world,

for you alone are holy, O God, blessed Trinity. **Amen**

*The moderator will say:*

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I declare this \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ duly constituted and competent to deal with any business which may come before it.

**- - -**

**OR**

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In your great mercy, O God, you called us into a living hope and joined us to the body of Christ.

You built your church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the head corner stone. Renew us by your Holy Spirit that we may be united in one faith, one hope and one baptism.

Hear us as we pray for the church. Awaken us from complacency, that in truth, simplicity and compassion, we may bear witness to your saving purposes in this place and throughout the world. May your people be set afire with pentecostal passion to praise your name, to proclaim good news to the poor, to set the captive free, to heal the sick and to rejoice in your presence at the breaking of bread.

Guide us now as we seek to administer with good order and wisdom the business of the day which is before us.

In the name of Jesus Christ.  **Amen.**

*The moderator will say:*

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I declare this court to be duly constituted and competent to deal with any business which may come before it.

**The Closing of a Court**

Every court except the session is required, before its rising, to determine and announce the time and place of the next meeting. The court is then closed with prayer. A benediction from Scripture is commonly used.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

the love of God,

and the communion of the Holy Spirit

be with you all.  **Amen.** *II Cor. 13:13.*

May mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

Now to the One who is able to keep you from falling,

and to make you stand without blemish

in the presence of God's glory with rejoicing,

to the only God our Saviour,

through Jesus Christ our Lord,

be glory, majesty, power and authority,

before all time and now and forever. **Amen.** *Jude 1:2, 24-25.*

May the God of hope

fill you with all joy and peace in believing,

so that you may abound in hope

by the power of the Holy Spirit,

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

*Rom. 15:13.*

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord be kind and gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favour

and give you peace.  **Amen.** *Num. 6:24-26 adapted.*