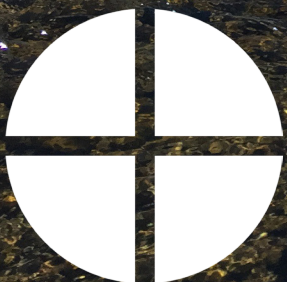


Ministry Handbook

The Practicalities of Calling and Supporting a Minister in the Local Church



baptist union
of scotland

The Practicalities of Calling and Supporting a Minister in the local church

This Pt 2 of the Ministry Handbook deals with the 'belts and braces' of how to treat well the person whom you call to serve your congregation, as your 'minister'. This is a very practical section. BUT it builds on the Pt 1 of the Ministry Handbook. So, before going any further, please make sure you have read Pt 1.

What follows addresses the most common situation in our churches, where there is one person appointed as 'the minister' or pastor; and where they are financially supported either full or part time. Where your situation is more complicated, or if you have any questions having read what follows, then don't hesitate to contact our office at Speirs Wharf. We are here to help you.

The advices contained here are not meant to be prescriptive. They are, however, the fruit of much experience. Please consider them carefully.

1. Calling a Minister

It's exciting to be looking for a new minister! But it's also important to honour the one who is leaving. So that's where we'll start.

The Close of a Ministry

The close of a ministry will be met with a range of responses from the members and congregation. Many will hear the news of the impending departure with sorrow, especially those who have deeply appreciated pastoral care provided in time of crisis. Whatever the reaction to the news, all should be concerned to work together to ensure that the closing weeks are full of blessing for minister and church.

Bidding farewell - The date of the last Sunday of the ministry should be agreed so that the leadership team can plan the farewell meeting appropriately. A letter - discreetly circulated to the congregation - can invite gifts to a fund which will express the gratitude of all to the minister and family. It should be decided who will make the presentation and who else should speak on behalf of the church. There should be an opportunity for local representatives to bring a greeting, though the proceedings should not be too lengthy.

Leaving Date - The church secretary and treasurer will need to discuss the date the minister proposes to leave the manse, so that the necessary practical arrangements can be made. Once a minister has said they are going to retire or demit office, it is only fair to the church that a date is quickly settled upon.

The Spiritual Health of The Church

A church should not regard the period between the close of one ministry and the opening of another as one of 'marking time'. Indeed, experience shows that it can be a time of spiritual growth. The church leadership and office bearers have a special responsibility for this and should prepare themselves for the extra demands.

Pastoral Care - The pastoral care of the congregation must continue and each church must find its own way of maintaining this ministry. Before the minister leaves, an accurate and up to date pastoral record should be made available for the church leadership

and office bearers. The church leadership and office bearers must use every means to promote the deepening of the fellowship between members at this time. The church's witness should not suffer and it's evangelistic endeavours should continue. All the departments of the church must be encouraged to maintain their standards and to report back regularly to the leadership.



The Sunday Ministry - Everything possible should be done to ensure the weekly preaching and teaching ministry is of the highest level. This will require booking preachers some months ahead. Sometimes a preacher may be available to take, say, four consecutive Sundays. Such help is invaluable. Consideration should be given to preaching themes to be followed by those who will be leading during the vacancy. The BUS offices will have note of ministers who are 'without charge'. The Lay Preachers Association have many members who are willing to serve our churches by preaching on Sundays. Remember that the staff and students of our theological colleges will be willing to help.

It is a really good opportunity, 'between ministers', to get more folk involved! Someone to welcome. Another leading prayers. Another leading the praise. Baptist churches believe that every Christian is a minister. Testimonies are always good. Try to get more than one voice sounding on a Sunday and encourage healthy levels of participation.

The congregation's leadership should look ahead and make careful provision for the festivals of the church, such as Advent, Easter, Pentecost or special occasions such as Church Anniversary celebrations, making sure that visiting preachers always know the relevant details of the services to be led, particularly noting arrangements for sharing communion. It is helpful to prepare a provisional order of service, together with details of the praise material used. Directions on how to find the church building and the times of the services, should be sent to each person leading worship. Adequate fees and expenses should always be paid.

When booking preachers during a period without a pastor it is wise to write and ask whether they are willing to postpone their visit if and when that date comes it is necessary to hear a prospective minister.

Special events - Enquiries for Dedications, Baptisms, Weddings or Funerals should come to the church secretary. Preparation for these occasions is important. Help should be sought from the Interim Moderator or a neighbouring Baptist minister. It is particularly important if a wedding is taking place to check that the statutory requirements are being observed. If there is any uncertainty on these matters, the Mission and Ministry Advisor can advise.

Membership Roll - Revision of the Church Membership Roll should be a regular feature of church life. It is especially important before a new minister comes that this is done. No minister wants this as an early responsibility in a new pastorate: they will want up-to-date information for planning initial pastoral care.

Prayer - Every member and friend of the Church must be urged to take their full responsibility in praying for the church. The needs of the fellowship should be made known, so that people may be assured that they are being prayed for, without divulging any confidential information. All ought to pray, in particular, that the whole Church be sensitive to the guidance of the Spirit of God concerning a new minister. There is no substitute for prayerfulness. There is no way that Christians can compensate for a lack of waiting on the Lord for guidance and grace.

Looking after the Manse

Where the church owns a manse and it is vacant, the building should be regularly visited and checked. The outgoing minister should be asked if there is a neighbour who would be willing to telephone the church secretary or property convener if there is any sign of vandalism. Gas, electricity and water supplies should be turned off at the mains. There should be curtains on the windows to discourage squatters. The building should be inspected to see if any major work needs to be done. The external decoration must be in good order. Work of this kind can be put in hand immediately. Internal redecoration should be left until the new minister is called.



A New Manse? - Sometimes a church decides to sell its manse and to buy another one. The church must seek the approval of the trustees for any sale or purchase. Usually a new house is not purchased until a minister has accepted a call to a pastorate. It should also be borne in mind that sometimes ministers are not only eager to own their own house, but have the means to do so. It may then be in the best interests of the church to let the manse.

Letting - If the church considers the possibility of letting the manse at any time, as well as considering the use of a letting agent, it is essential that the advice of the solicitor to the congregation's trustees be sought before any steps are taken. Failure to do this could seriously impede the future accessibility of the manse for its proper purpose. The church would be well advised to consult the Union Law Agent before creating a tenancy.

Insurance - The provisions of the insurance policy of the manse should be carefully examined: Sometimes a policy becomes invalid if a house is left vacant. If in any doubt the insurance company can

be asked if the cover still operates, or if any additional premium is necessary.

Council Tax - The church secretary should write to the local authority to secure exemption during the time when the manse is vacant.

Towards a Settlement

God is active in the calling of a leader to serve: knowing this, the church can pray with assurance and patience as it waits for God's will to be revealed. The guidance of the Holy Spirit comes not only through the settlement process: He also guides as God's people seek to listen to His voice as they assess suitable candidates. God asks for our co-operation and this calls for a right understanding. It demands that the important factors are kept in the forefront of the members' thinking, and that trivial matters are discounted. There is no perfect Baptist minister; indeed, there is no particular person ideally suited for any particular Baptist church, although churches sometimes seem to expect one! There is a person chosen by God, who can minister to a particular people and with whom that people can work, and who will lead them in the fulfilment of God's purpose for that church.

First Steps

As soon as a church knows that its minister is leaving, the leadership should contact the Mission and Ministry Advisor and arrange a meeting together. The minister should not attend. At this meeting there is opportunity to consider the future direction of the church, the appointment of an interim moderator and the setting up of a search group.

Profile for Future Ministry

In preparation for the above meeting the church leadership and office bearers, meeting without the leaving minister, should reflect on three questions:

- What is the present situation of the church?
- In what direction should the church move in the future, and what kind of minister is needed to help accomplish this?
- How is God envisioning the church to think about the future?

When the church leadership and office bearers have completed this reflection, they should prepare a profile on one or two sides of A4. The profile should be shared with the church meeting to seek agreement on this reflection on the present situation and the kind of ministry being sought. It is always a provisional document, yet it provides an important starting point for conversations with a future minister, on which the leadership and members are agreed.

Interim Moderator

The leadership should bring to the church meeting a nomination for interim moderator, preferably a trusted local leader from a Baptist Union church, who comes from outwith the membership to ensure the necessary element of objectivity.

An interim moderator may be invited to chair the search group, church leadership and church meetings and to undertake specified pastoral care. Precisely what involvement the moderator has should be openly discussed with them, bearing in mind other responsibilities

they have. The arrangements should then be clearly communicated to the congregation.

If they are being invited to serve only with regard to the search group, the interim moderator should be asked to chair search groups and to be present at leaders' and church meetings relevant to the search. In this situation, the church should also make careful provision for the pastoral needs of the fellowship and appoint someone to chair the leaders' and church meetings.

The interim moderator should be consulted constantly and all their out-of-pocket expenses met regularly. An invitation to preach early in the period without a pastor would introduce them to the whole church and enable them to 'get the feel' of the fellowship they serve.

Nominations

The Baptist Union of Scotland holds lists of Accredited and Pre-accredited Baptist ministers in Scotland. Such ministers have been approved by our Board of Ministry (or a comparable body in BUGB), received appropriate training and have exercised their gifts in spiritual leadership and service within the churches of the Union.

Contact with the Mission & Ministry Advisor (MMA) is strongly advised before and throughout a time of vacancy. The MMA will be aware, through contact with the church and involvement in the National Settlement Team (which gathers in BUGB offices ten times per year), of ministers available and willing to come and serve in Scotland. The MMA will be able to offer suggestions of ministers or ministers in training for consideration for vacancies, and will in most cases have profiles of candidates to share confidentially.

Names submitted by others should be carefully sifted. Should churches be interested in a non-accredited person, part of the exploratory discussions should include the issue of accreditation and the candidate's readiness to pursue this.

Ministry Resource Grant aided churches must have an accredited minister to qualify for their grant; and other churches have Trust Deeds that require the minister to be accredited. In any case, a wise leadership will appreciate that accreditation exists to provide, as far as can be, a quality of ministry acceptable to our churches.

Sometimes, before a ministry has concluded, an opportunity occurs for worship to be led by another minister who may be under consideration for appointment. If this happens, the outgoing minister should be consulted to ensure they are agreeable to this arrangement. Most ministers are glad to encourage the church to progress towards a settlement at the earliest possible time.

Search Group

The search group, when appointed, should ensure that they proceed in accordance with the requirements of the Trust Deeds and/or the Constitution of the Church. The normal procedure is for the group to be concerned with bringing a nomination for the pastorate, while the leadership will be responsible for settling on Terms of Appointment. The search group should appoint a secretary to record its Minutes and carry out its instructions. The search group should be appointed by the church and be as representative of the church (in terms of age and interests) as possible. It usually consists of:

- a. All the church leadership and office bearers plus a number of

others **or**

- b. Some of the church leadership and office bearers plus a number of others.

The search group should not be so large that it makes an interview inhibiting and unsatisfactory. If option (b) is adopted, the search group should report to the church meeting through the church leadership and office bearers.

The search group should first prepare itself by personal and corporate devotion to:

- be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's guidance;
- seek the Lord's choice for His people;
- avoid merely human wisdom;
- consider the needs of the church and the neighbourhood.

Search groups must exercise the strictest confidentiality with regard to all their work, and especially concerning and potential candidates shared with them. They should also seek to keep the Mission & Ministry Advisor informed as to what stage they are at with such names.

Students leaving the Baptist College are known to the Mission & Ministry Advisor. Each year, their names are introduced to the churches in the same way as those of ministers already engaged with congregations. Congregations considering a student should seek references from the Scottish Baptist College's Principal and from the church where the student is in membership. They will be able to supply helpful information about the student's gifts and abilities.

Procedure

Ministers are normally limited in the number of occasions they can be away from their own congregations and are understandably reluctant to give a succession of Sundays to another church. Much more importance is now being placed, therefore, on interviewing candidates as a first step.

- a. When the search group have agreed to approach a certain minister, an invitation is sent to them to meet the search group on a week-night evening, preferably in one of their homes. The minister can be sent the church profile and church magazine (if appropriate) or directed to the church website, as a way of providing information ahead of meeting together. This provides a useful starting point for the discussion.
- b. A nominee can be invited to meet the search group for open and honest discussion. Both the search group and nominee are trying together to discover the answer to the question, 'Do these gifts of ministry seem to fit this church situation?' It is important at this stage that the expectations of both minister and search group be shared on such subjects as conduct of worship, preaching, pastoral care, and authority relating to minister, leadership and church meeting. The church is responsible for the nominee's travelling expenses. If either party becomes clearly convinced that this is NOT God's will, it should be communicated quite clearly after the meeting and the matter taken no further. Neither the minister's present church (if any) nor the church which is vacant would have been disturbed un-necessarily.
- c. If both parties wish to pursue the matter further, the candidate's name should be given and the church made aware that they are coming at the request of the search group with

an invitation to preach. If, after interview, the search group want the candidate to preach and the candidate is agreeable, the church should be made aware that they are preaching as a possible suitable minister for the church at the search group's invitation. At this point the candidate must decide whether or not it seems to be possibly the right church for them in God's purpose. A spouse should also be invited to accompany the candidate on their visit.

- d. The church will need to be reminded of the necessity for treating any information given to them as confidential. The nominee's name should not be published in the church magazine or website without prior consent being given. Members should be urged to make every effort to be present, but to treat the services themselves as occasions for worshipping God. Hasty judgments should not be made. The assessment of suitability comes later at a church meeting. In all this the moderator plays a large part and can helpfully guide the members.
- e. Two courses of action are open at this stage:-
 1. After the candidate has preached, and if both parties wish to pursue the matter further, the search group will call a church meeting to consider, in a spirit of earnest prayer, whether the candidate should be called back to preach as sole nominee for the pastorate.
 2. In some circumstances, this procedure may be shortened to one visit, after which a call may be sent. This could be the case if a candidate is coming from a very long distance, or if after their first visit, there is such a consensus of opinion that they should be called.

At any such meetings questions should be allowed and answered with references **ONLY** to the person in view. After the completion of whatever course is followed voting should take place as indicated later.

Churches should keep nominees fully aware of their position at each stage. Nominees should **NOT** be placed in competition with each other. Sermons should **NOT** be recorded without the permission of the preacher. This permission should be sought in advance and not just as the candidate is about to conduct the service.

Voting

Following the visit, the church should be asked to vote according to its agreed procedures.

- a. At the church meeting which decides on the call, great care should be taken to ensure all is done to the glory of God. Prayer is essential. Members must be reminded of their high responsibility to be channels through which the mind of Christ is expressed.
- b. A 2/3rd majority of the votes returned should be required as a minimum basis for a call. No call should be sent as unanimous unless every vote was originally and clearly cast for the nominee.
- c. If the vote is taken at a church meeting it should be by ballot and should require a 2/3rd majority of those present. (NB. A system which requires the vote of **EVERY** church member can lead to a serious distortion of 'the mind of the church' if a significant number of the members are inactive for whatever reason).

- d. All members should make a special effort to be present if and when a person is asked to return as sole nominee for the pastorate.

2. Supporting a Minister

Where accredited ministry is an honour and responsibility conferred by our Union of churches on a person, this places them in a position of trust and responsibility to share care and concern for the life and witness of our congregations. It is likewise appropriate that those whom we accredit and hold in respect are appropriately honoured and supported among us.

Congregations, when calling an accredited minister to a position of leadership among them, are not engaging an employee. For this reason, it is appropriate to have an agreement between minister and congregation that can be designated a **ministry covenant**, which will include the terms and conditions of appointment. It is not appropriate to view or hold out this agreement as a contract of employment. The ministry covenant is an agreement entered into between the minister and the congregation - a relationship of trust, not contract: where that trust is violated or abandoned, the bond of minister and congregation is then severed.

In recognising and accepting God's call to serve in the office of minister in a local congregation, a person so called should covenant before God and the congregation as follows:

- to be faithful and trustworthy in executing such holy office and calling under God
- not to abuse the trust afforded them
- to exercise good stewardship of time and energy, taking sufficient time for study, prayer and recreation.

Congregations, on their part, should recognise their responsibility under God to honour and materially support those called by God to serve in the office of minister. Congregations should also be mindful to fulfil all the statutory and fiscal requirements laid upon them by the Law of Scotland, as these pertain to supporting a person in the office of minister to the congregation.

a. Draft invitation of Call

Recognition of the call of God by the congregation

We, the congregation of, are persuaded as to the calling of God, to exercise the ministry and office of minister to this congregation, of

In so recognising God's calling, we willingly submit to God's will and invite you to enter into and undertake this pastoral office among us. We recognise the covenantal character of pastoral ministry, built on trust, as exercised by those holding the office of pastor. We in turn commit and covenant ourselves to prayerfully and dutifully support you in an honouring and appropriate manner.

Signed:

b. Draft acceptance of Call

Recognition of the call of God by the minister

I, , am honoured to recognise and accept your lead-
ing under God to call me to serve the congregation of
.....in the office and ministry of minister.

I recognise the covenantal nature of this calling and appointment, built
on trust. In so accepting the call to serve you as pastor, I promise to
faithfully fulfil God’s requirements, and to apply myself to pursuing and
upholding the standards of conduct, character, competency and the
convictions befitting the office of minister.

Signed:

c. Terms and Conditions of Appointment

The following Terms of Appointment are to be used in the case of a
Call to a grant-aided church and in general terms are recommended as
guidelines for other churches.

They are based on the recommendations of the minimum provisions
recommended by the most recent Annual Assembly of our Union (many
congregations will enter into variations of this, some agreeing more gen-
erous provisions), as follows:

The following terms of settlement have been agreed between
Rev
And Baptist Church
Date

1. The appointment is to full-time service and is to be terminable by
the Minister on a minimum of one month’s notice or by the church
on a minimum of 3 month’s notice, with occupancy of the manse
(where relevant) extended a further 3 months at no extra cost to
the Minister. Any subsequent extension of the latter would be by
mutual agreement between the Minister and the church on agreed
terms.
2. It is understood that the Minister:-
 - Has 2 days (or six segments, a segment being a morning, after-
noon, or evening) per week completely free of church duties.
 - Will not accept any other paid employment without the consent
of the church leadership
 - Be granted sabbatical leave with no loss of stipend in every 7th
year of ministry, provided the Minister has served in their current
church at least 2 years of the 7 required.
 - is entitled to 5 weeks annual holidays plus local public holidays
or days in lieu. In addition the Minister will be entitled to minis-
ter in other churches for up to 4 Sundays.
 - will be released for 2 weeks annual study leave / reflection /
spiritual development time.
3. The church will pay the Minister the Reference Stipend at the
current rate as agreed by the Annual Assembly. The stipend will be
paid by standing order, in monthly installments, on the 20th day of
each month.
4. The stipend will be paid in full during any temporary incapacity of
the Minister through illness. In the event of actual or anticipated
prolonged incapacity the Pension administrators should be notified.
5. The church will pay the Minister, in addition to stipend, a pension
contribution to the Baptist Union of Great Britain Minister’s Pension
Scheme or the Minister’s own pension scheme if applicable.

6. The church will pay the full cost of travelling expenses incurred by
the Minister in the performance of ministerial duties. When a car is
used, the appropriate allowance paid is 45p/mile, for up to 10,000
miles; thereafter, 25p/mile.
7. The church will be responsible for both a home telephone and
broadband package and mobile package. The Minister should
make a monthly contribution for personal use.
8. The church will pay in full the Council Tax due on the manse or the
Minister’s own house, in addition to any housing allowance paid.
9. The church will render full support to their Minister towards their
attendance at the Annual Assembly of our Union and at such
training days or conferences where attendance is recommended or
required, for the purposes of ministerial accreditation, by the Baptist
Union of Scotland.
10. The church will reimburse the Minister any expenses incurred on
church business, e.g., office and administration expenses, postage,
stationery, hospitality, attending the Baptist Union Assembly, Minis-
ters’ Fellowships, etc..
11. The church will pay the removal expenses of the Minister on taking
up appointment.
12. The Minister may be provided with a manse by the church for the
performance and fulfillment of duties. In connection with the provi-
sion of such a manse the church will be responsible for:
 - Such re-decoration of the interior of the manse as may be
required before the Minister settles.
 - The maintenance of the interior and exterior of the manse on
an agreed basis.
 - The annual inspection of the manse to ensure the property is in
good repair and up-grading undertaken as appropriate.If the Minister lives in their own house, the church will pay a housing
allowance. This may vary significantly across the country; however, a
realistic amount should be paid monthly by the church. It is expected
that this would not currently be less than £6,000 per year.
13. The above financial provisions will be reviewed each year, and any
changes notified in writing.
14. If any difference of opinion should arise in connection with the
operation or understanding of these Terms of Appointment, the
Minister shall first consult with the Church Secretary and the
Church Treasurer.

Church Secretary
Minister
Date

NOTE: Signed copies of the above terms should be deposited with the
Minister and the Church Secretary.

In the case of a grant aided church the above agreement should also
be signed by the Mission and Ministry Advisor of the Baptist Union of
Scotland.

Mission and Ministry Advisor
Date

3. Service of Ordination / Induction

Commissioning a Minister

We would offer two forms of service, A and B, as possible templates for a local church, when organising the induction of a new minister.

i. Form A

Induction (and ordination) to Ministerial Charge

INTRODUCTION

All God's people are called to ministry. Everyone who has been baptised into Jesus Christ is called to serve him and one another, in the fellowship of the church, wherever we go and in all that we do. But God calls some to servant leadership among his people; to devote themselves especially to prayer and the word of God; to better equip the church for the life of discipleship in God's world. These people we appoint and release into that calling with prayer and with our blessing. We respect their role among us as ministers, examples and leaders. We consider them 'ordained' to this ministry.

Today we are affirming God's call upon xx, recognising him/her as a minister, ordained by God to the service of his church and accredited by the Baptist Union of Scotland.

So first, let's hear from xx about how God has led him/her to this point.

xx's Story

Affirmation by representative of the church

Commendation by the College

Questions To xx

xx, you can only fulfil the ministry to which you are being set apart in humble dependence on God, in sincerity of purpose, and holiness of life.

We invite you to declare your faith in Christ and acceptance of this ministry in the presence of God, before these representatives of his people, by answering these questions.

Do you believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and do you confess Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord?

I do. This is the God in whom I trust.

Jesus said, 'The greatest among you must be the servant of all'. Do you believe that you are called by God to servant leadership in our Baptist network of churches?

I believe that God has called me.

Jesus commissioned us to preach the good news and make disciples everywhere. Will you proclaim that good news, through word and deed, relying on the power of the Holy Spirit, making disciples, and seeking the coming Kingdom of God?

As a disciple of Jesus Christ, I will call others to follow Him.

Jesus said: 'Feed my sheep.' In your ministry will you be diligent in your study of Scripture and play your part in the nourishment and nurture of the flock of God?

Trusting the Lord as my Shepherd, I will.

Jesus taught his disciples to pray and not give up. Will you be constant in encouraging God's people in prayer and cultivating a life of prayer yourself?

By God's grace, I will.

Jesus challenged his disciples to leave self behind, to take up their cross and to follow after him. Are you determined to walk this path even though you do not know where it leads?

With the Lord's help, I am

You are being ordained as a Minister accredited by the Baptist Union of Scotland. Let me read to you our Declaration of Principle, which describes our shared core convictions, then invite you to confirm that these are also your beliefs.

Our Scottish Baptist Declaration of Principle states:

1. That the Lord Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour, is the sole and absolute Authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each Church has liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to interpret and administer his Laws.
2. That Christian Baptism is the immersion in water into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who 'died for our sins according to the Scriptures; was buried and rose again the third day'.
3. That it is the duty of every disciple to bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelisation of the world.

xx, are you in wholehearted agreement with this statement?

I am

Question to the Church

Please will you all stand. I invite you to respond, 'We do'.

As members of this church, xx's previous churches, and as friends gathered to support him today, do you believe that God has called him to Christian ministry and do you acknowledge him as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. **We do.**

Prayer and The Laying On Of Hands

xx has chosen three or four appropriate people to lay on hands and lead prayers.

Declaration of Ordination

xx, recognising your faith, your call and your love for Jesus and his people, on behalf of the churches of our Scottish Baptist Union and the whole church of Jesus Christ, we recognise and declare that God has ordained you to the work of ministry.

Prayer, using the words from Colossians chapter 1:

We pray that God will fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and give joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. Amen.

Induction Covenant, Baptist Church

Introduction

We have gathered to recognise and celebrate the call of Christ. This is the *call of grace* that he extends to us all, to respond to his immeasurably great love for us with joy and faith and holiness.

This is also the *call to one another*, to become his church, a building of living stones joined together in him, loving one another as he loves us, united as Jesus and the Father are one.

And the call of Christ is a *call to ministry*. Everyone who has been baptised into Jesus Christ is called to serve him and one another, in the fellowship of the church, wherever we go and in all that we do. But God calls some to servant leadership among his people; to devote themselves especially to prayer and the word of God; to better equip the church for the life of discipleship in God's world. These people we appoint and release into that calling with prayer and with our blessing. We respect their role among us as ministers, examples and leaders.

Testimonies

X, today we recognise that God has called you to become minister of Y Baptist Church. Through prayer and seeking the Lordship of Christ in your life, you have recognised and received a call by God's Spirit to serve in this church family. Would you now tell us how God has led you to this point?

Testimony by X

The members of Y Baptist Church have discerned together it is right before God to call X as the minister here. I invite (Secretary?) to tell us how the Lord has led the church to this point.

Testimony by (Secretary?)

Questions

To the Minister

X, do you accept the call of Christ and this congregation to serve as minister here, teaching the word of God faithfully, equipping God's people for works of service, and shepherding God's flock which is under your care?

Minister: In the strength that Christ gives, I do.

[A Song or Hymn may be sung here.]

Induction Covenant.

The induction to ministry takes the form of a conversation between X and the church. These words you share form a solemn agreement of trust, a commitment which you make before God today.

So I invite X to lead you in these words and I invite the members and congregation of this church to stand with him and say the words of response (headed 'church family' on the screen).

X: Today we stand with each other recognising Christ, the Lord, in our midst, affirming our faith in the God who loves us with a love that transforms us, and who calls us to work for a transformed world

All: Today we stand with each other, recognising Christ in each other,

affirming the calling of the Spirit who has brought us together this day.

X: Today I bring myself and the gifts I have, and I commit to serve and encourage this church and community; to respect and care for you, to take responsibility among you, to seek God with you, to listen to God in you, and to work with you to be like Christ in this world.

All: Today we bring ourselves and the gifts we have, and we commit to serve and encourage one another; to seek the way of Christ, to keep the unity of the Spirit, and to encourage you as our Minister as we make this journey together.

X: God of life, you call us and envision us. We give ourselves today to each other and to you, trusting that as you call us so you promise to be with us, to nurture and sustain our life together and to guide our paths. Amen

Recognition (by leader)

I now invite all of us to stand.

For those who are not part of this local church but are here to support and celebrate the new ministry here, if you are able would you respond to this question 'We do'?

Do you recognise the work of God's Spirit bringing together this minister and congregation, and do you offer your prayers and encouragement for them in the days ahead?

We do.

Prayer and Laying on of Hands

[Three or four people have been chosen to represent the church and possibly wider ministries in the area. One or more lead in prayer for X.]

Declaration

X, today we have heard testimony of how the Lord has led you to this fellowship and how the congregation has discerned it is the Lord's will to invite you to become pastor; you and the church have made promises which now form a covenant between you; and we have commissioned you to this new ministry with prayer and the laying on of hands. Therefore in the name of the Lord Jesus, and on behalf of our Baptist family of churches, I declare you duly inducted as Minister of Y Baptist Church.

The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you.
The Lord turn his face towards you
and give you peace.
Amen