



Life Passages

In the waters of baptism, Christians make the passage with Jesus Christ through death to the new life of the resurrection. Each day of our lives is shaped by this baptismal journey. Within our lives, we mark particular occasions of transition and passage in various ways. Welcoming guests into its midst, the Christian assembly surrounds people at these times, proclaiming the good news of God's love in Christ in the context of particular circumstances in human life.

Orders of service for three principal life occasions—healing, funeral, and marriage—appear in this resource. The patterns for these rites follow closely the common pattern for the primary gathering of the Christian assembly. The order for Healing is placed within Holy Communion or the Service of the Word, following the hymn of the day. Marriage and Funeral are services in which the inclusion of the Lord's supper is encouraged.

Other prayers and blessings for particular circumstances are provided in Additional Prayers (pp. 72–87).

Pattern for Worship—Healing

Healing

God's gift of healing comes to us in word, prayer, and sign.

Prayers of Intercession

Laying On of Hands

Blessing

Gathered by the Holy Spirit around Jesus Christ, the Word of salvation, we pray for God's healing in all its dimensions. Personal prayer and a sign of healing—the laying on of hands, which may be accompanied by anointing with oil—are offered to all.

Pattern for Worship—Funeral

Gathering

The Holy Spirit, the comforter, gathers us in worship.

Thanksgiving for Baptism

Greeting

Prayer of the Day

Gathered by the Holy Spirit at a time of death, we proclaim Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life. We begin in the name of the triune God and join in prayer.

Word

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

Readings

Sermon

Hymn of the Day

Creed

Prayers of Intercession

Lord's Prayer

In the face of death, scripture readings and preaching witness to the resurrection and bring God's word of hope and comfort. We proclaim that word also as we sing and profess the Christian faith. Prayers for those who mourn and in thanksgiving for those who have died are followed by the prayer Jesus taught.

Meal

God gives a foretaste of the feast to come.

Sending

God blesses us and sends us out in peace.

Commendation

Committal

Reading

Committal

Blessing

Into the arms of mercy God receives our loved one, and we go out in the peace of Christ.

With scripture and prayer we commit our loved one's body to its resting place and to God's love, then receive the blessing of God as we go forth.

Central elements of the liturgy are noted in bold type; other elements support the essential shape of Christian worship.

Pattern for Worship—Marriage

Gathering

The Holy Spirit gathers us in worship as we witness the marriage.

Entrance

Greeting

Declaration of Intention

Prayer of the Day

Gathered by the Holy Spirit and greeted in the name of the triune God, the assembly joins in worship. Those to be married state their intention; the assembly promises support. All are gathered into prayer.

Word

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

Readings

Sermon

Hymn of the Day

Scripture readings, preaching, and song witness to the gift and vocation of marriage, bringing God's word of law and promise into this context of human life.

Marriage

As two become one by their promises, God blesses them.

Vows

Acclamation

Marriage Blessing

Prayers of Intercession

Lord's Prayer

The two pledge their love and faithfulness; the giving of rings is a symbol of this promise. The minister announces the marriage, and the assembly acclaims it. The prayers ask God's blessing upon this marriage and remember the needs of the whole world.

Meal

God sets out a marriage feast for all those joined to Christ.

Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Peace

Blessing

Together with the newly married, we go out into the world with God's peace and blessing.

Healing



The order for healing is an expression in worship of the church's ministry of healing. Here all who sense the need for God's healing in any aspect of their lives may join in prayer for others and themselves. Here each person may come to receive a word of blessing and prayer. Here each one may also receive a physical gesture of healing: the laying on of hands, which may be accompanied by anointing with oil. These signs, first given in baptism, tell us again that we are sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked forever with the cross of Christ, who is health and salvation for the whole world.

In its ministry of healing, the church does not replace the gifts of God that come through the scientific community nor does it promise a cure. Rather, the church offers and celebrates gifts such as these: God's presence with strength and comfort in time of suffering, God's promise of wholeness and peace, and God's love embodied in the community of faith.

Healing

This order may take place within Holy Communion or the Service of the Word, usually following the hymn of the day. The assembly may be seated.

Introduction

The presiding minister may address the assembly with these or similar words.

Our Lord Jesus healed many as a sign of the reign of God come near and sent the disciples to continue this work of healing—with prayer, the laying on of hands, and anointing. In the name of Christ, the great healer and reconciler of the world, we now entrust to God all who are in need of healing.

Prayers of Intercession

Prayers of intercession are prayed, including prayers for healing. To each petition the assembly responds with these or similar words.

**In your great mercy,
hear us, O God.**

*The presiding minister concludes the prayers, and the assembly responds **Amen.***

Laying On of Hands

The presiding minister may address the assembly in these or similar words.

Sisters and brothers, I invite you to come and receive a sign of healing and wholeness in the name of the triune God.

Those who wish to receive laying on of hands (and anointing) approach and, as conditions permit, they may kneel.

The minister lays both hands on each person's head and may use one of these forms or similar words. The minister may also anoint the person's forehead with oil, making the sign of the cross.

_____*Name*_____, in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, be strengthened and filled with God's grace, that you may know the healing power of the Spirit.

Response: Amen.

OR

Receive this oil as a sign of forgiveness and healing in Jesus Christ.

Response: Amen.

OR

Father in heaven, for Jesus' sake, send your Holy Spirit upon your servant, _____; drive away all sickness of body and spirit; make whole that which is broken; deliver *her/him* from the power of evil; and preserve *her/him* in true faith, to share in the power of Christ's resurrection and to serve you with all the saints now and evermore.

Response: Amen.

The laying on of hands may be accompanied by the singing of acclamations (#218–221), psalms, hymns, and other music.



After all have returned to their places, the assembly stands, and the presiding minister continues.

Let us pray.

Living God, through the laying on of hands [*and anointing*], grant comfort in suffering to all who are in need of healing. When they are afraid, give them courage; when afflicted, give them patience; when dejected, give them hope; and when alone, assure them of the support of your holy people. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Blessing

The presiding minister concludes the order for healing.

Almighty God, who is a strong tower to all, to whom all things in heaven and on earth bow and obey, be now and evermore your sure defense, and help you to know that the name given to us for health and salvation is the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Peace

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other in the peace of the risen Christ.

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

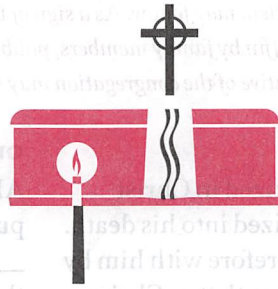
The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace and may say **Peace be with you** *or similar words.*

The assembly is seated.

The service continues with the offering.



Funeral



At a person's death, the church shares the grief of those who mourn and remembers the brevity of life on earth. At the funeral we give voice to sorrow, thank God for our loved one, and entrust this companion of ours into the hands of God. Trusting in God's promise in baptism that we are claimed by Christ forever, we rest in the sure hope of the resurrection. When the church gathers to mark the end of life, Christ crucified and risen is the witness of worship, the strength of mutual consolation, and the hope of healing.

This service may be used when the body or ashes are present, or it may be adapted for use as a memorial service. A remembrance and expression of thanksgiving for the life of the deceased may take place after the prayer of the day or before the commendation.

Gathering

The ministers may meet the coffin and the bereaved at the entrance to the church. The assembly stands and faces them.

The presiding minister may address the assembly using one or both of these paragraphs, or in similar words.

Welcome in the name of Jesus, the Savior of the world. We are gathered to worship, to proclaim Christ crucified and risen, to remember before God our *sister/brother* name, to give thanks for *her/his* life, to commend *her/him* to our merciful redeemer, and to comfort one another in our grief.

OR

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the source of all mercy and the God of all consolation, who comforts us in all our sorrows so that we can comfort others in their sorrows with the consolation we ourselves have received from God.

Thanksgiving for Baptism

A thanksgiving for baptism may follow. As a sign of being clothed with Christ in baptism, a pall may be placed on the coffin by family members, pallbearers, or other assisting ministers. The minister or a representative of the congregation may say:

When we were baptized in Christ Jesus, we were baptized into his death. We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

The presiding minister may lead this acclamation.

Eternal God, maker of heaven and earth, who formed us from the dust of the earth, who by your breath gave us life, we glorify you.

We glorify you.

Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life, who suffered death for all humanity, who rose from the grave to open the way to eternal life, we praise you.

We praise you.

Holy Spirit, author and giver of life, the comforter of all who sorrow, our sure confidence and everlasting hope, we worship you.

We worship you.

To you, O blessed Trinity, be glory and honor, forever and ever.

Amen.

A procession may form and enter, the ministers leading. A hymn, psalm, or anthem may be sung.

Greeting

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

OR

All who are baptized into Christ have put on Christ. In *her/his* baptism, _____ was clothed with Christ. In the day of Christ's coming, *she/he* shall be clothed with glory.

Prayer of the Day

The presiding minister prays the prayer of the day.

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

O God of grace and glory, we remember before you today our *sister/brother*,
_____*name*_____. We thank you for giving *her/him* to us to know and to love as a companion in our pilgrimage on earth. In your boundless compassion, console us who mourn. Give us faith to see that death has been swallowed up in the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that we may live in confidence and hope until, by your call, we are gathered to our heavenly home in the company of all your saints; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

OR

Almighty God, source of all mercy and giver of comfort, graciously tend those who mourn, that, casting all their sorrow on you, they may know the consolation of your love; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

OR *(at the death of a child)*

Holy God, your beloved Son took children into his arms and blessed them. Help us to entrust _____ to your never-failing care and love. Comfort us as we bear the pain of *her/his* death, and receive us all into your everlasting arms, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Word

Readings

The assembly is seated. Two or three scripture readings are proclaimed. When the service includes communion, the last is a reading from the gospels. Responses may include a psalm in response to a reading from the Old Testament, a sung acclamation preceding the reading of the gospel, or other appropriate hymns, songs, and psalms.

Sermon

Silence for reflection follows.

Hymn of the Day

The assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song.

Creed

The Apostles' Creed may be spoken.

**I believe in God the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living 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.**

* Or, "he descended into hell," another translation of this text in widespread use.

Prayers of Intercession

Prayers of intercession are prayed. To each petition the assembly responds:

**God of mercy,
hear our prayer.**

The presiding minister concludes the prayers, and the assembly responds Amen.

A service with communion continues with the peace. Following the prayer after communion, the service continues with the commendation on p. 283.

OR

A service without communion continues as follows.

The Lord's Prayer is prayed by all.

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

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

Sending

Commendation

The ministers take their places at the coffin. The presiding minister leads the commendation.

Let us commend name to the mercy of God, our maker and redeemer.

Silence is kept.

The presiding minister may place her/his hand on the coffin during this prayer.

Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant name.
Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive *her/him* into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light.

Amen.

Here or during the procession out, a farewell may be sung: "Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace," an acclamation (#222–223), or another hymn or song.

If the committal occurs at another time, a blessing may precede these words of sending.

Let us go forth in peace,
in the name of Christ. Amen.

A procession may form and leave the church, the ministers leading.

Committal

The ministers precede the coffin to the place of interment. Words of comfort from the scriptures may accompany or conclude the procession.

The presiding minister greets the assembly.

Grace and peace from our Savior Jesus Christ be with you all.

Let us pray.

Holy God, holy and powerful, by the death and burial of Jesus your anointed, you have destroyed the power of death and made holy the resting places of all your people. Keep our sister/brother name, whose body we now lay to rest, in the company of all your saints. And at the last, O God, raise *her/him* up to share with all the faithful the endless joy and peace won through the glorious resurrection of Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

A scripture reading may follow.

The coffin may be lowered into the grave or placed in its resting place.

Earth may be cast on the coffin as the presiding minister says:

In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, we commend to almighty God our sister/brother name, and we commit *her/his* body to

the ground or the deep or the elements or its resting place;
earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

The Lord bless *her/him* and keep *her/him*.

The Lord's face shine on *her/him* with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon *her/him* with favor and + give *her/him* peace.

Amen.

The following response may be sung, or may be spoken by the minister.

Rest eternal grant *her/him*, O Lord; and let light perpetual shine upon *her/him*.

One of the following prayers may be said.

O Lord, support us all the day long of this troubled life, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes and the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then, in your mercy, grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

OR

Merciful God, you heal the broken in heart and bind up the wounds of the afflicted. Strengthen us in our weakness, calm our troubled spirits, and dispel our doubts and fears. In Christ's rising from the dead, you conquered death and opened the gates to everlasting life. Renew our trust in you that by the power of your love we shall one day be brought together again with our *sister/brother* name. Grant this, we pray, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer may be prayed.

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

The assembly is blessed and sent forth.

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you complete in everything good so that you may do God's will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in God's sight; through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever.
Amen.

Let us go in peace.

OR

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

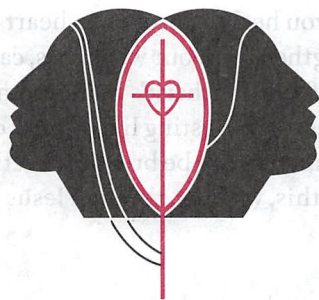
OR

Almighty God, Father, **+** Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.
Amen.

Let us go in peace.



Marriage



Marriage is a gift of God, intended for the joy and mutual strength of those who enter it and for the well-being of the whole human family. God created us male and female and blessed humankind with the gifts of companionship, the capacity to love, and the care and nurture of children. Jesus affirmed the covenant of marriage and revealed God's own self-giving love on the cross. The Holy Spirit helps those who are united in marriage to be living signs of God's grace, love, and faithfulness.

Marriage is also a human estate, with vows publicly witnessed. The church in worship surrounds these promises with the gathering of God's people, the witness of the word of God, and prayers of blessing and intercession.

Gathering

Entrance

The assembly stands as the ministers and the wedding group enter. Music—hymn, song, psalm, instrumental music—may accompany the entrance.

Greeting

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.



Declaration of Intention

The minister addresses the couple in these or similar words, asking each person in turn:

 Name , will you have name to be your wife/husband, to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love her/him, comfort her/him, honor and keep her/him, in sickness and in health, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her/him as long as you both shall live?

Response: I will.

The minister may address the assembly in these or similar words.

Will all of you, by God's grace, uphold and care for name and name in their life together?

We will.

Prayer of the Day

The presiding minister leads the following or another prayer of the day.

Let us pray.

Gracious God, you sent your Son Jesus Christ into the world to reveal your love to all people. Enrich name and name with every good gift, that their life together may show forth your love; and grant that at the last we may all celebrate with Christ the marriage feast that has no end; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Word

Readings

The assembly is seated. Two or three scripture readings are proclaimed. When the service includes communion, the last is a reading from the gospels. Responses may include a psalm in response to a reading from the Old Testament, a sung acclamation preceding the reading of the gospel, or other appropriate hymns, songs, and psalms.

Sermon

Silence for reflection follows.

Hymn of the Day

A hymn of the day may be sung.

Marriage

Vows

The couple may join hands. Each promises faithfulness to the other in these or similar words.

I take you, name, to be my wife/husband from this day forward,
to join with you and share all that is to come,
and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us.

OR

In the presence of God and this community,
I, name, take you, name, to be my wife/husband;
to have and to hold from this day forward,
in joy and in sorrow, in plenty and in want, in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish, as long as we both shall live.
This is my solemn vow.

Giving of Rings

The couple may exchange rings with these or similar words.

Name, I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness.

OR

Name, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow.
With all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you,
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Acclamation

The presiding minister addresses the assembly.

Name and name, by their promises before God and in the presence of this
assembly, have joined themselves to one another as husband and wife.

Those whom God has joined together let no one separate.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

The assembly may offer acclamation with applause. A sung acclamation, hymn, or other music may follow.

Other symbols of marriage may be given or used at this time.

Marriage Blessing

The couple may kneel. The presiding minister may extend a hand over the couple while praying for God's blessing in the following or similar words.

Most gracious God, we give you thanks for your tender love in sending Jesus Christ to come among us, to be born of a human mother, and to endure the cross for our sake, that we may have abundance of life.

By the power of your Holy Spirit pour out the abundance of your blessing on _____
name and _____
name. Defend them from every enemy. Lead them into all peace. Let your love be a seal upon their hearts, a mantle about their shoulders, and a crown upon their foreheads.

Bless them so that their lives together may bear witness to your love. Bless them in their work and in their companionship; in their sleeping and in their waking; in their joys and in their sorrows; in their life and in their death.

Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that table where your saints feast forever in your heavenly home, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Parents or others may speak additional words of blessing and encouragement at this time.

Prayers of Intercession

The assembly stands. Prayers of intercession for the world and its needs may be prayed.

Each petition may end:

Gracious and faithful God,
hear our prayer.

The presiding minister concludes the prayers, and the assembly responds **Amen.**

A service with communion continues with the peace. After the presiding minister greets the assembly, the couple may greet each other with the kiss of peace, and the assembly may greet one another in peace.

OR

A service without communion continues as follows.

The Lord's Prayer is prayed by all.

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

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

Sending

Peace

If it has not been included earlier in the service, the greeting of peace may be shared.

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

The couple may greet one another with the kiss of peace. All present may greet one another with a gesture of peace, and may say Peace be with you or similar words.

Blessing

The presiding minister proclaims God's blessing in these or similar words.

The blessed and holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love, defend you on every side, and guide you in truth and peace, now and forever.
Amen.

OR
God Almighty send you light and truth to keep you all the days of your life. The hand of God protect you; the holy angels accompany you; and the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you now and forever.
Amen.

Dismissal

An assisting minister may send the assembly forth in these or similar words.

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

A hymn may be sung or instrumental music played as the wedding group and the ministers depart.

