

**ORDAINED MINISTRY AND CHURCHES GROUP**

***Liturgical Material for Use in a***

***Newly-Formed Resource Area***

*(offered to Interim Moderators for use in the Induction Service for a new minister*

*or within a service to mark the inauguration of a new Resource Area*

*if this is marked with a separate act of worship.)*

**Introduction**

1. In most instances the Induction Service for a new minister of a Resource Area (RA) will be the first occasion that the member congregations will come together with the shared identity of being an RA. In most, if not all, cases the RA itself has not been inaugurated – even though members will have been offered the opportunity to come together as a Church Meeting to consider and agree a call to the incoming minister. The material in this document is offered to Interim Moderators to be incorporated within the Induction Service.
2. We suggest that logically the marking of the inauguration of the RA and the commitment of the members of its churches to support one another belongs *before the new minister is invited to make their affirmations and the congregation makes its promises for the new ministry.* We recommend, therefore, that the Act of Commitment to the Partnership as a Resource Area follows the Ministry of the Word and precedes the reading of the Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of The United Reformed Church and the minister’s Affirmations.
3. As a minimum we encourage the inclusion of the Act of Commitment as the visible means of the members of the RA churches to expressing their sense of belonging together. Alongside the congregational responses there is the option of each congregation bringing forward a symbol to represent their own identity. Thought will need to be given well in advance to how congregations are invited to identify and choose a symbol that represents them as a church community and/or place and choosing one of their members to bring it forward at the service. This might be a welcome role for someone who might be apprehensive about having a speaking role in a service.
4. In some instances Interim Moderators, in conversation with the incoming minister, may like to offer the opportunity for each of the RA churches to be represented within the liturgy by inviting someone from each congregation to read one of the opening Scripture Sentences and/or Prayers of Adoration and Confession. We recognise that the number of congregations in an RA will not always be the same but twelve sections are offered for this purpose and can be re-numbered and allocated as appropriate to the number of churches in a given RA.

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**ACT OF COMMITMENT TO PARTNERSHIP AS A RESOURCE AREA**

*(to follow the Ministry of the Word and precede the Affirmations by the new minister)*

**Statement regarding the formation of the ‘XY’ [name of] AREA**

*A short statement will be given as narrative for the generic Synod Policy of Resource Church/Resource Area and the particular configuration of named congregations for this new Resource Area.*

*(The statement will normally be given by either the Moderator or the Convenor of OMCG)*

**Presentation of Symbols**

*Each of the congregations forming the new Resource Area is invited to come forward with their chosen symbol and to lay it on the Communion Table or such place as is considered suitable.*

**Affirmation**

*The members and friends of the congregations within the Area are invited to stand.*

Presiding minister: As members, elders and ministers of The United Reformed Churches *(and, if appropriate Local Ecumenical Partnerships)* in this newly formed *(name)* Area:

Do you commit yourselves in partnership

to support each other in mission,

encourage each other in discipleship

and share with each other in ministry and leadership

in obedience to Jesus, our Lord and Saviour?

Response: **With God’s help, we do.**

**May we grow together in unity**

**and be built up into the body of Christ in love**

**to the glory of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,**

**now and for ever. Amen.**

The Presiding minister offers a prayer for the new Area.

**OPTIONAL: OPENING SENTENCES AND PRAYERS OF ADORATION AND CONFESSION**

**to be read by at least one representative of each of the Area churches**

*(numbers to be amended depending on the number of congregations forming the Area)*

**Scripture Sentences**

1 You are Christ’s body.

Christ is head of his body, the Church.

2 He is the source of its life;

He was raised from death over all things supreme.

3 Through him God chose to reconcile all things to himself.

For Jesus Christ is Lord.

4 Let us then exalt his name forever. For in Christ we have boldness and confidence of access through our faith in him.

**All Four:** Give thanks to him and bless his name.

**Prayers of Adoration and Confession and Forgiveness**

5 Let us pray

We praise and adore you, God, the creator:

through your love and power all things came to be,

and continue in their being.

6 We praise and adore you, Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh:

through your death on the cross we are reconciled to the Father,

and by your rising we are born again into a living hope.

7 We praise and adore you, Holy Spirit, the Giver of life:

through your fire the Church was born,

and by your gifts the body of Christ is built up.

8 With the whole Church on earth and in heaven

we praise and adore you,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, forever.

Amen

9 Let us confess our sin:

Gracious God, why are we called the body of Christ?

We are not worthy of his name.

10 Christ proclaimed truth—we obscure it.

Christ prayed for the unity of all—we are divided.

11 Christ opened the way to your presence—we have shut people out.

We shrink from the demands of justice—

Christ touched the sick and blessed the poor.

12 We love our friends—Christ loved his enemies.

We hide in the Church—Christ gave himself for the world.

Congregation **Forgive us. Conform us to Christ.**

**May all that we do arise from our unity with him.**

**May his life renew the life of the world.**

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

Moderator: In repentance and in faith hear the promise of grace and the assurance of pardon.

Here are words you may trust, words that merit full acceptance:

‘Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.’

‘Your sins are forgiven.’

To all who turn to him he says, ‘Follow me’.

Congregation: **Thanks be to God.**

Moderator: God of life and power,

we open our hearts and rejoice

that the depth of your being is love.

We praise you for showing us in Jesus

what you call us to be.

Come in the power of your Spirit

to bring us together and make us your own

to the glory of Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

*Gillian Poucher and Geoffrey Clarke, 23 June 2022,*

*For Ordained Ministry and Churches Group.*

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