

AN ORDER FOR THE CLOSING OF A METHODIST PLACE OF WORSHIP

NOTES

1. Although presented as a complete service, this order can and should be appropriately adapted for local needs. It may be appropriate to use elements of this service together with other resources and extempore prayers.
2. Whenever this service is used, there needs to be an appropriate balance between acknowledging grief and loss and giving thanks for God's goodness and rejoicing in God's hope. Those leading worship should pay close attention to this, adjusting elements as needed, choosing hymns and songs appropriately and considering how best to speak of God's enduring purposes.

THE GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

1. **The presiding minister says:**

In Christ we are joined together and grow into the holy temple of the Lord;

In Christ we are built together into the dwelling place of God.

2. **Hymn**

3. **Prayer of Adoration**

Eternal God, Creator of time and space, beginning and end of all things;

you have been with us in all that is past:

to you be glory forever!

Loving God, Saviour of the world, the Way, the Truth and the Life;

you are with us as we gather today:

to you be glory forever!

Sustaining God, Spirit of renewal and inspirer of faith;

you will be with us as we go from this place:

to you be glory forever!

Holy God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

you are with us always:

to you be glory forever!

4. **This or some other prayer of penitence may be said:**

Sisters and brothers,

as we meet to worship God,

giving thanks for all that God has done in this place,

let us call to mind our sins:

Silence

Loving God, when we have followed our own desires, and failed to proclaim your love,

Lord, forgive us.

Generous God, when we have lived for our own needs, and failed to embody your generosity,

Lord, forgive us.

Transforming God, when we have loved our own comforts, and failed to hear your call,

Lord, forgive us.

Silence

The presiding minister says:

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end.
This is Christ's gracious word: "Your sins are forgiven."

Amen. Thanks be to God.

5. Collect

Lord God,
whose Son was made the Cornerstone
of a temple made of living stones,
as we move on from this place
may we so live our lives
that they might shout aloud of your grace and love,
through Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God now and forever. **Amen.**

6. The story of the community in that place, leading to the closure of the building, is told. Testimony may also be given.

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

7. Two or three readings from scripture.

It is recommended that these reflect themes of lamentation and commemoration as well as praise and thanksgiving. Suggested readings are:

Old Testament: Jeremiah 31:10-14; Lamentations 3:22-33; Ezekiel 37:1-14

Psalms: 26; 61; 84

New Testament: 2 Corinthians 5:1-9; Hebrews 8:1-6; Revelation 4:1-8

Gospel: Luke 12:16-31; John 2:13-22; John 14:12-17

If Holy Communion is to be celebrated a passage from the Gospels always concludes the readings. There may be psalms, canticles, hymns, songs or periods of silence between the readings.

8. Sermon

9. Hymn

10. These or some other prayers of intercession:

Let us pray to the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Spirit:

Living God, your Spirit came as wind and fire upon the apostles,
bringing the Church to birth
and empowering it for mission and service:

pour out your Spirit on all who seek your will, on all gathered here, on the churches of our circuit and area...

May we be blessed anew for the work you set before us.

O Lord, the Giver of Life,
receive our prayer.

Living God, through the breath of your being you brought all creation to birth:
pour out your Spirit on all the nations and their leaders...
May all people be inspired into the ways of justice and peace,
that the hungry may be fed, the homeless find a welcome
and the oppressed be brought to liberty and fullness of life.

O Lord, the Giver of Life,
receive our prayer.

Living God, you anointed your Son Jesus Christ to bring sight to the blind,
hearing to the deaf, and healing to the sick and the sorrowing:
pour out your Holy Spirit on all those who suffer,
those who are filled with anxiety
and all who need our prayers...
May they know your comfort and grace.

O Lord, the Giver of Life,
receive our prayer.

Living God,
you raised Christ from the dead:
pour out your Holy Spirit upon us
As we rejoice in that which has been
grieve at that which will be lost,
and look in hope for what is yet to come,
may we know the assurance of eternal life
and the strength of the fellowship of all the saints.

O Lord, the Giver of Life,
receive our prayer. Amen

11. The Lord's Prayer

We say together the prayer that Jesus gave us:

**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 for ever. Amen.**

As our Saviour taught his disciples, we pray:

**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, the power and the
glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

12. Prayers of Thanksgiving

The congregation may move around the building as the following prayers are led from various places. Before each prayer a memory or memories may be shared of an event in the life of the building and its congregation.

At the door...

Welcoming God, we give thanks for all those who have encountered your presence in this place, for all those who have discovered your love shown to us through Jesus Christ.

God of hospitality:

we give you our thanks.

At the font...

Transforming God, we give thanks for all those who have entered the Church through the waters of Baptism, for those who have received the gift of new life through the promise of the Holy Spirit.

God of new life:

we give you our thanks.

In the aisle...

Uniting God, we give thanks for all who have stood before you and pledged themselves to each other, for new relationships celebrated and new families created.

God of joy:

we give you our thanks.

Comforting God, we give thanks for all who have joined the Company of Heaven, whose memory we still cherish, whose love still inspires us.

God of peace:

we give you our thanks.

At the pulpit or lectern...

Inspiring God, we give thanks for your Living Word proclaimed from this place over the generations, your Word that informs our thinking and motivates our living, and for all those who have preached in this place.

God of grace:

we give you our thanks.

At the organ, music stands, or second lectern...

Encouraging God, we give thanks for the worship that has been offered here, for the ways in which your praise has been proclaimed and your love lifted high in our hearts, and for all those who have enabled worship in this place.

God of celebration:

we give you our thanks.

At the Communion Table...

Tangible God, we give thanks for all the ways in which you have come to us and for your means of grace made known especially through gifts of bread and wine, your body and your blood.

God of love:

we give you our thanks. Amen.

The celebration of Holy Communion may be appropriate. If so, the service continues as below. If Holy Communion is not celebrated, the service continues from no. 27B.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

13. The Peace All stand.

As they were grieving and afraid in an upstairs room,
Christ came and stood amongst his disciples and said,
“Peace be with you.”

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

The people may greet one another in the name of Christ.

14. EITHER

The Apostles' Creed
All stand.

Let us declare our faith in God.

**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 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 again 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

The Nicene Creed
All Stand.

Let us profess the faith of the Church.

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius
Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again,
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and
the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

THE PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

15. Hymn

16. The offerings of the people are presented, Bread and wine are brought to the table (or if already on the table are uncovered). The presiding minister takes the bread and wine and prepares them for use.

THE THANKSGIVING

17. All stand.

The presiding minister leads the great prayer of thanksgiving:

The Lord be with you
And also with you

Lift up your hearts
We lift them to the Lord

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God
It is right to give our thanks and praise

It is indeed right,
in joy and sorrow,
in darkness and in light,
to give you thanks,
almighty and gracious God,

for all of your great works:
your calling of creation into existence,
your calling of a people to be your own,
your calling of men and women to speak wisdom and to prophesy.

We give you thanks for sending your Son for the redemption of all creation,
for sending the Church into all the world to live his life and feed his sheep,
for sending people to lead the work of faithful renewal.

We give you thanks that that through your Spirit
you inspired hands to build this place,
inspired voices to fill it with your praise and your word,
inspired hearts to nurture the young and reach out to those who did not know you.

In thanks we join with all the faithful company
on earth and in heaven,
to proclaim your glory:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy God, we praise you
that on the night in which he was betrayed
our Saviour Christ took bread
and gave you thanks.
He broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying,
'Take, eat. This is my body, given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper, he took the cup of wine
gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying,
'Drink from it, all of you.
This is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for all people
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this in remembrance of me.'

Remembering all that you have done for us,
and all those who have gone before us in this place,
we declare the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.**

Pour out your Holy Spirit
that this bread and wine may be for us Christ's body and blood
and that we, fed by Christ, might be united in him.
Nourish us for all that is to come,
so that, at the last,
we might be gathered with that multitude no one can number,
and share for ever with your whole Church in your eternal glory.

**Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the power of the Holy Spirit,
we worship you with songs of everlasting praise.
Blessing and honour and glory and power
be yours forever and ever. Amen.**

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

18. The presiding minister breaks the bread in the sight of the people in silence, or saying:

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ

**Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

19. Silence, all seated or kneeling.

20. Jesus, Lamb of God,
have mercy on us.

Jesus, bearer of our sins,

have mercy on us.

Jesus, redeemer of the world,

grant us peace.

THE SHARING OF THE BREAD AND WINE

21. The presiding minister, those assisting with the distribution, and the people receive, according to local custom.

Appropriate words of invitation may be said.

23. Words such as the following are said during the distribution:

The body of Christ keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

The blood of Christ keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

24. During the distribution there may be appropriate music.

25. The elements that remain are covered with a white cloth.

PRAYERS AND DISMISSAL

26. Silence

27. Prayer

EITHER

A Let us pray.

**Faithful God,
with these holy gifts
you have fed and strengthened us
in Jesus Christ your Son.
Guide us on our way,
that with all your faithful people
we may come to share the feast
of your eternal kingdom;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

OR

B Let us pray.

**God our refuge and our strength:
you know our deepest thoughts and feelings,
now and at all times.**

**As we prepare to leave this place,
we commit each other into your hands.**

**Hold our memories,
travel with us into the future,
and give us your peace,
the peace which passes all understanding,
now and for all that is yet to come.**

**In Jesus' name,
Amen.**

28. Hymn

During this hymn appropriate items, such as the communion vessels, the lectern Bible, the font, the baptism and/or wedding registers and other symbols of the life and fellowship of the church may be processed out of the building as signs of the life of the church continuing elsewhere. Careful thought should be given to recognising and honouring the way(s) in which members of the church will be continuing their Christian discipleship in the future.

29. Blessing

The presiding minister says:

May Christ be always at *your/our* side;
give *you/us* courage for the journey,
and be *your/our* goal and *your/our* joy.
And may the blessing of God,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon *you/us* now and forever. **Amen.**

30. Dismissal

The presiding minister says:

We go in peace for God's Spirit dwells in us.
We will be a temple of God wherever we go.