

# NATIONAL WORKING GROUP ON WORSHIP

## Theology and Discipleship

The Uniting Church in Australia

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### Commissioning of Elders/Leaders and Church Councillors

#### NOTES

- (i) This service forms part of the regular Sunday service of the congregation. Normally this order follows the Preaching of the Word and the Affirmation of Faith. It is appropriate that holy communion be celebrated.
- (ii) The Scripture readings used may be the lectionary readings for the day or a selection from the following:

Exodus 18:13-25	Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16	Luke 12:32-40
Numbers 11:16,17,24,25	1 Peter 5:1-4	John 15:1-11
Romans 12:1-13	Luke 5:1-11	John 21:15-19

- (iii) This service is to be used on all occasions for the commissioning of elders and church councillors, and if only elders or church councillors are to be commissioned, then the rubrics indicate the sections to be omitted.
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## Commissioning of Elders and Church Councillors

### 1 SENTENCES

*(See People's Book, p. 109)*

There are diverse gifts;  
**but it is the same Spirit who gives them.**

There are different ways of serving God:  
**but it is the same Lord who is served.**

God works through people in different ways:  
**but it is the same God  
whose purpose is achieved through them all.**

Each one of us is given a gift by the Spirit:  
**and there is no gift without its corresponding service.**

There is one ministry of Christ:  
**and in this ministry we all share.**

Together we are the body of Christ:  
**and individually members of it**

Based on I Corinthians 12:4ff and Basis of Union, para. 13

## 2 PRESENTATION

*The minister addresses the people:*

The Uniting Church provides for the exercise  
by men and women  
of the gifts God bestows upon them  
for the building up of the church.  
Having sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit,  
we are now to commission as elders and/or church councillors  
those whom we have elected to this ministry.

*A representative of the congregation presents the candidates and says:*

On behalf of the people of this congregation,  
I present the following persons to be commissioned or recommissioned  
as elders and/or church councillors:

*The representative reads the names of the candidates.  
The candidates stand together facing the congregation  
and the Minister addresses them:*

Brothers and sisters,

*or*

N and N,  
the congregation has elected you  
to serve as elders/church councillors.  
The church council shall give priority in its life  
to building up the Congregation in faith and love,  
sustaining members in hope,  
and leading the Congregation  
to a fuller participation in Christ's mission in the world.

Reg.3.1.13(a)

*If there are elders to be commissioned/recommissioned,  
the following statement shall be included:*

The ministry of Elder is one of spiritual oversight,  
and may also be exercised in pastoral visitation, teaching,  
encouraging members of the Congregation to share in mission,  
and assisting the Minister in leadership of worship  
and administration of the sacraments.

*Where the elders are to be members of the Church Council,  
the following should be included:*

Elders who serve on the Church Council  
have a particular responsibility  
to ensure that such matters have priority  
in the work of the Church Council.

Reg 3.1.10(a)

### **3 THE VOWS**

*The minister asks the candidates:*

Do you confess anew Jesus Christ as Lord?

**I do.**

Do you believe that you are called by God through the church to this ministry?

**I do.**

Being guided by The Basis of Union of the Uniting Church in Australia, will you live and work within the faith and unity of the one holy catholic and apostolic church?

**With God's help I will.**

Relying on God's grace, do you promise to carry out the duties of your office?

**I do.**

*The people stand.*

*The minister says:*

Will you, the members of this congregation, accept these brothers and sisters (or, N and N) as elders/church councillors?

**We will.**

Will you encourage them in love and support them in their ministry, serving with them the one Lord Jesus Christ?

**We will.**

May God give you strength to fulfil these vows, and to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus from generation to generation for ever.

**Amen.**

*The people sit.*

## 4 ACT OF COMMISSIONING

*Those appointed by the church council to join with the minister in the laying on of hands come forward.*

*The minister says:*

Beloved in Christ,  
let us pray in silence for these people  
before we commission them for the work  
to which we believe the Holy Spirit has called them.

*The candidates kneel.*

*After a time of silence the minister says:*

Almighty God,  
we thank you that in every age you have chosen leaders  
to serve and care for your people.  
We thank you that you have called N and N  
to serve you.  
May those you have chosen  
have the same mind which was in Christ Jesus  
and be faithful disciples,  
giving example to Christ's flock  
and witnessing to the truth of the gospel;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

*The minister and those appointed lay hands on the head of each candidate in turn, and the minister says:*

God of grace,  
through the Holy Spirit  
empower your servant N  
for the ministry of elder/church councillor.

*The people respond:*

**Amen.**

*When all the candidates have received the laying on of hands, the Atonic Blessing may be said or sung by the people, (Australian Hymn Book, 572) or said by the minister.*

The Lord bless you and keep you  
the Lord make his face to shine upon you,  
and be gracious unto you;  
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,  
and give you peace.

Numbers 6:24-26

*Alternatively, the minister says this blessing:*

The God of all grace,  
who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ,  
establish and strengthen you in all things,  
to the glory of his name  
and the good of his church on earth.

Based on 1 Peter 5:10

## 5 DECLARATION

*The candidates stand.*

*The minister says:*

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
I declare you to be elders/church councillors  
of the Uniting Church in Australia  
in the ..... Congregation.

*The people may applaud.*

*The minister and other elders/church councillors give the right hand of fellowship to the new  
elders/church councillors.*

## 6 PRAYERS

Intercessions for the following may be included in Prayers of the People:

The newly-commissioned elders/church councillors and their families

The life and mission of the congregation

The witness of elders/church councillors within the Uniting Church in Australia.

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