

COMMISSIONING SERVICE

Your team is being sent as representatives of the wider community on this mission experience. Therefore, they need to be prayerfully and intentionally commissioned by the community to go forth in their name into the mission field.

Ideally, the commissioning service happens on the Sunday before travel. It can be an entire service devoted to mission or just a prayer or covenant incorporated into a portion of the service. If the entire service is devoted to mission, it could incorporate a sermon from the youth minister or an adult team member focused on the purpose or hopes for the journey.

If this is a diocesan mission experience or pilgrimage, the Team could choose one commissioning service to happen in each community on the Sunday before travel. In addition, the Team can ask the bishop (or another diocesan representative) to participate in the final Team meeting and commission the Team on behalf of the diocese.

To help you get started, several sample commissioning services are included in this Manual.

This is a sample commissioning service that can be used or adapted for churches about to embark on a mission trip. Feel free to use it in whatever way works for your community.

Commissioning Service, Charles River Deanery
Service of Thanksgiving and Commissioning June 12, 2005

Psalm 134

Behold now, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord,
you that stand by night in the house of the Lord.
Lift up your hands in the holy place and bless the Lord,*
the Lord who made heaven and earth bless you out of Zion.*

Litany of Thanksgiving

Let us give thanks to God for all God's gifts so freely bestowed upon us.
For the beauty and wonder of your creation, in earth and sky and sea,
We thank you Lord.

For all that is gracious in the lives of men, women and children, revealing the
image of Christ,
We thank you Lord.

For our daily food and drink, our homes and families, and our friends,
We thank you Lord.

For minds to think, and hearts to love, and hands to serve,
We thank you Lord.

For health and strength to work, and leisure to rest and play,
We thank you Lord.

For the brave and courageous, who are patient in suffering and faithful in
adversity,
We thank you Lord.

For all valiant seekers after truth, liberty, and justice,
We thank you Lord.

For the communion of saints, in all times and places,
We thank you Lord.

For those who have gone forth from our congregations to witness to your glory and goodness in the lives of all people. We give thanks especially for those who went to Belize, and offered themselves to the building up and care of the community of St. Andrew's and its school. We give thanks for their offering, the friendships made, the bonds of love extended to them and for their safe return. Help us to be like them, your faithful servants and active participants in the building up of your realm on earth.

Above all, we give you thanks for the great mercies and promises given to us in Christ Jesus our Lord;

To him be praise and glory, with you, O Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

The Commissioning:

The candidates and sponsor come forward.

Celebrant or officiant:

Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, we are all baptized by the one Spirit into one Body, and given gifts for a variety of ministries for the common good. Our purpose is to commission these persons in the Name of God and of this deanery to a special ministry to which they are called.

Sponsor:

I present to you these persons to be ambassadors for Christ on behalf of this deanery and their congregation. They have been preparing to go on a mission trip to (place) to form friendships and to (name mission project or community to which they are going).

Celebrant to those called:

You have been called on behalf of your congregation to go out as witnesses to the Risen Christ, as His ambassadors, to uphold and seek to serve Christ in all persons and places. Through Christ and with Him, you will share in a ministry of reconciliation and encouragement to build up the body of Christ and to care for all who come to Him. Will you faithfully and reverently carry out this ministry to the honor of God and the benefit of this community and all whom you serve?

Candidates:

I will

Celebrant:

Let us pray

Gracious God, your Son before he ascended to glory declared that your people would receive power from the Holy Spirit to bear witness to him to the ends of the earth: Be present with all who go forth in his Name, protect them all the day long and bring them safely home. Let your love shine through their witness, so that all who come to them may see your glory in all that is given, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, look with favor upon these persons who have now reaffirmed their commitment to follow Christ and to serve in his name. Give them courage, patience, and vision; and strengthen us all in our Christian vocation of witness to the world, and of service to others; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

In the Name of God and of this congregation, I commission you, (name) as ambassadors and missionaries of this deanery. Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and give glory to God. I commend you to this work, and pledge you our prayers, encouragement and support.

The almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us. *Amen.*

Global Mission Partnerships:

A Mission Goal of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts

<http://www.missiongoal.org/content/commissioning—service>

A COVENANT & COMMISSIONING SERVICE FOR MISSION TEAMS AND CONGREGATIONS

Introduction:

This group of disciples has committed themselves to a mission experience. They will travel together, meet new people, and encounter God in unexpected ways. We gather to send them in mission as God's people. We go with them through support and prayer, through blogs and reports. We anticipate receiving them when they return by opening our congregation to the new ideas and commitments they bring home.

Scripture Reading: John 20:11–18

Commissioning

Congregation: Mary stood weeping outside the tomb.

Team: *We go to put ourselves in places of the world's suffering—perhaps to weep together.*

Congregation: She turned around and spoke to the gardener who actually was the risen Jesus.

Team: *God comes to us and the world in new and unexpected ways.*

Congregation: She heard her name — and her life changed.

Team: *We go outside our comfort zones on this trip. We travel and work and listen as God's people. We accept the hospitality of others. We share our own gifts and talents and selves without expectations.*

Congregation: She ran back home to tell the other disciples of her experience of the risen Christ. Their lives were changed.

Team: *We commit ourselves to continuing our involvement with the people and issues we encounter upon our involvement with the people and issues we encounter upon our return home.*

Congregational Covenant

One: *By participating in the commissioning of this group, we commit ourselves to God's continuing testament.*

Congregation: *to recognizing anew God's continuing life—giving acts in the world.*

One: *We commit ourselves to changed lives.*

Congregation: *... that our congregation will be open to new ways of being God's people in the world through the mission experience of this group.*

One: *Go, to share yourself and hear your name. Return to live the resurrection story.*

The United Church of Christ

<http://www.ucc.org/volunteer/mission-trip-opportunities/commissioning-and-covenant.html>