

INSTALLATION SERVICE FOR PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

BY REBECCA HARRISON

Sunday worship is a good time to hold this service, reminding everyone that PW's ministry exists in and through the congregation. Ask your pastor to suggest a good time to include it. The liturgical leadership may be provided by your pastor or by PW leadership from the presbytery or the synod.

The service suggests giving candles to each leader being installed. The candles may be all the same color, or they may be a different color for each office.

Lighting the Christ Candle

The Christ Candle reminds us that Jesus Christ is the light of the world. As this candle is lit, may it serve as a constant witness to Christ's presence in our individual lives, in our congregation and in the world. May it also remind us that "where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (*Matthew 18:20*).

Prayer of Invocation

Holy God, you sent your son Jesus the Christ into the world to bring us your light. Shed that light upon us now. We pray that in word and in deed, all that we do and all that we are may be a reflection of your grace, mercy and love. In Jesus' name.
Amen.

Hymn

"Lord of Light, Your Name
Outshining" (PH #425)

Litany and Questions of Installation

The Gospel of *Luke* makes it abundantly clear that Jesus called not only men but also women to discipleship, and thus to ministry. Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, are both lifted up as faithful and spirit-filled women. *Luke 8:2-3* includes Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Susanna among the followers of Jesus, women who supported his ministry. The report of Mary and Martha in *Luke 10:38-42* lifts up Mary's primary calling to be a student of Jesus. And in *Luke*, as in all of the Gospels, the women are the first people to encounter the risen Lord.

Luke presents women as responding to a variety of calls and offering a variety of services. So too, women today respond to God's call to a variety of ministries. Today, we

acknowledge women who have been called to serve God through positions of leadership with Presbyterian Women in the Congregation. From the congregation, I now call forward these women: [*Here, name each leader and her position; have them all stand facing the congregation as they answer the questions for installation.*]

Liturgist: There are different gifts,
Congregation: but it is the same Spirit who gives them.

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

Liturgist: God works through different people in different ways,
Congregation: but it is the same God who achieves God's purpose through them all.

Liturgist: Each one is given a gift by the Spirit,

Congregation: to use for the common good.

Liturgist: Together we are the body of Christ,

Congregation: and individually members of him.

Liturgist: Though we have different gifts, together we are a ministry of reconciliation led by the risen Christ. We work and pray to make his church useful in the world, and we call men and women to faith, so that, in the end, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God [our Creator].*

Liturgist: Do you, the newly elected leadership of Presbyterian Women in and for this congregation, promise to serve faithfully, following the Lord Jesus Christ in all you say and do?

Leaders: I do.

Liturgist: Will you work with one another and pray for one another, and with and for your sisters in Presbyterian Women throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)?

Leaders: I will.

Liturgist: Will you, in all your service, draw on the God-given resources of energy, intelligence, imagination and love?

Leaders: I will.

Liturgist: Will you, through your service and your daily life, be a living witness to the Light of Jesus Christ?

Leaders: I will.

Liturgist: Do you, the members of Presbyterian Women in this congregation, promise to follow these leaders as they serve you, the Church, and Jesus Christ?

Congregation: We do.

Will you support, nurture, and encourage them in their work, praying with and for them?

Congregation: We will.

You are now installed as leaders of Presbyterian Women for this congregation. As a token of your promises; as a constant reminder that Jesus is indeed lighting the way in your lives and in the world; and as a symbol of your call to reflect his light through your service, please accept these candles. When you experience the busyness that sometimes accompanies this calling, turn to Jesus to lighten your load. When easy answers are not forthcoming, turn to Jesus to shed light on the path you should take. When you are overcome with joy and happiness, give thanks to Jesus for a bright, new day. In all things, know within your hearts that Jesus is truly the Light of the World, and the Light of your lives.

Prayer of Installation

Creating God, throughout the ages you have called women and men to serve you, in the church and in the world. As you call, you gift these leaders with the skills, talents and resources they need for their service. We give you thanks for those who respond to the call to serve, and for the gifts you give. We thank you for your Son, Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, who through his ministry showed the world that his call was to

all people, regardless of gender, age or any other human category. Especially we thank you, Gracious One, for the women here today, who have answered the call to lead through Presbyterian Women. May they find joy and blessing in their service; may they balance service with their needs for family time, work, church and relaxation. In all that they do, may they live their lives as an expression of the light that Jesus has brought to the world. For all this, O God, we give you thanks and praise, in Jesus' holy name. Amen.

Blessing

As you go now into these new positions of leadership, go with the knowledge that Christ Jesus will light your path; he will lighten your load; he will brighten your day. Bear witness to his eternal love in all that you do, and be a living reflection of God's grace, mercy, justice and peace. And may the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God and the power of the Holy Spirit be with you all, this day and forevermore. Amen.

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* From the "Service of Ordination and Installation," *The Worshipbook*. The Joint Committee on Worship for Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Church in the United States and The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), pp.89-90

PH—*The Presbyterian Hymnal* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1990)