

The Methodist-United Reformed Church Liaison Group

Guidelines for Induction and Welcome Services

Introduction

Methodist welcome services and United Reformed Church induction services, while both marking the beginning of a ministry in a new place, serve different purposes and have a different ecclesial feel to them:

- a Methodist welcome service recognises the stationing of a minister¹ or probationer by the Methodist Conference to a circuit; the stationing process involves consultation and in the service the minister or probationer is welcomed to the circuit;
- a United Reformed Church induction service recognises a local decision to call a minister to a particular pastorate that has been concurred with by the Synod; it is an affirmation by the pastorate of its call to the minister and an affirmation by the minister of his/her call to ministry in the pastorate.

In recognition of this, it is recommended that, when a minister is serving both churches, it is appropriate to add an induction to the welcome service or a welcome to the induction service.

The following guidelines are offered to those arranging services of welcome or induction for ministers of word and sacrament and probationer presbyters. They may be adapted for others, including church related community workers of the United Reformed Church and deacons and diaconal probationers of the Methodist Church.

Guidelines for Induction and Welcome Services for ministers of word and sacrament and probationer presbyters to pastorates/appointments in which they are to serve both the United Reformed Church and the Methodist Church

1. The use of an appropriate denominational form of service for the minister being welcomed or inducted: 'The Welcome of Ministers, Deacons and Probationers' (page 355ff in *The Methodist Worship Book*²) or 'Induction of Ministers of Word and Sacrament' (page 277ff in *Worship* from the United Reformed Church).
2. That the appropriate authority be responsible for arranging the service: for the Methodist Church, the Circuit; for the United Reformed Church, the Synod in consultation with the pastorate.
3. That appropriate ministers from both denominations be present: for the Methodist Church, the Chair of District and/or the Superintendent of the Circuit; for the United Reformed Church the Moderator of Synod or his/her deputy. The appropriate minister from the denomination of the minister being welcomed or inducted to preside assisted by the appropriate minister(s) from the other denomination. The presiding minister is consulted on the final form of the service.
4. An assisting minister of the denomination other than that of the minister being welcomed or inducted be invited to make a statement recognising the ministry of the minister on behalf of the other denomination. When a United Reformed Church minister is inducted, the following or another suitable declaration should be made by the Methodist assisting minister after

¹ In the Methodist Church, the term 'minister' is used of both presbyters and deacons.

² *The Methodist Worship Book* was published before the term 'minister' started to be used of both presbyters and deacons in the Methodist Church; previously it was used only of ministers of word and sacrament.

section 9 of the United Reformed Church induction service, including a reference to being authorised to serve the Methodist Church as a presbyter:

The Conference has authorised *N* to serve the Methodist Church as a presbyter and we joyfully welcome *him/her* to serve among us.

or:

We have asked the Conference to authorised *N* to serve the Methodist Church as a presbyter and we joyfully welcome *him/her* to serve among us.

When a Methodist presbyter (or probationer presbyter) is welcomed, the following or another suitable declaration should be made by the United Reformed Church assisting minister after section 13 of the Methodist welcome service, including a reference to membership of the Synod:

We joyfully receive *N* to serve among us in the United Reformed Church and welcome and receive *him/her* as a member of our Synod.

5. An additional affirmation to those made by the minister be added into the service:

For a Methodist presbyter or probationer presbyter:

Recognising that you are appointed to serve both the United Reformed Church and the Methodist Church, will you faithfully serve both churches, upholding their traditions and honouring a spirit of unity of worship and service?

Answer: I will.
I ask God to help me,
and I invite you to join with me
in seeking to be one in Christ.

May we live our unity in Christ.

For a United Reformed Church minister:

Recognising that you are appointed to serve both the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church, will you faithfully serve both churches, upholding their traditions and honouring a spirit of unity of worship and service?

I will, in the name of Christ who unites us all.

The appropriate place for this is: at the end of section 14 in the Methodist welcome service; and between the penultimate and final affirmations in section 13 of the United Reformed Church induction service.

6. For a Methodist presbyter or probationer presbyter, a specific prayer asking for the blessing of the Holy Spirit on their ministry in the particular appointment be offered by the United Reformed Church assisting minister after section 15 in the Methodist welcome service. This prayer to be considered by the United Reformed Church as the induction into pastoral care of churches that include United Reformed Church members.
7. Other appropriate welcomes can be offered by members of both denominations: at section 19 in the Methodist welcome service; at section 18 in the United Reformed Church induction service. Where possible this should include both the wider and local church.

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