

Board President:

With a deep hope for the power of love and artfully expressed stories, O God, we celebrate their/her/his dreams of touching lives and bringing change to this world.

Minister/Leader 2:

With a deep belief in redemptive justice, O God, we celebrate their/his/her commitment to this study of [subject, focus of studies].

Minister/Leader 2:

May [Name] feel empowered in this naming of their/his/her call.

Minister/Leader 1:

May [Name] feel empowered in this honoring of their/his/her call.

Board President/Church Secretary/Moderator:

May [Name] feel empowered in the commitment of these people to support their/his/her and uphold their/his/her in their/his/her learning and discernment.

Minister/Leader: Together, we pray

Congregation and leaders:: *projected, printed or led as an echo/responsive reading*

If projected or printed:

May we all, at least every now and then,
feel your [realm/ kin-dom] near and see your face, O God.
Support us as we do our work.
Empower us as we share the journey.
Amen and Amen.

Without words available to the congregation, a leader reads a short phrase and the congregation echoes it back.

May we all,
 May we all,
at least every now and then,
 at least every now and then,
feel your [realm/ kin-dom] near
 feel your [realm/ kin-dom] near
and see your face,
 and see your face,
O God.
 O God.
Support us
 Support us
as we do our work.
 as we do our work
Empower us
 Empower us
as we share the journey.
 as we share the journey.
Amen
 Amen
and Amen.
 and Amen.

All return to their places.

Chair of Elders/Other leader in the congregation:

Along the way, you will need refreshment and solace.

Today we remind you to accept the gifts of God as they are lived through the people of God. So that you may feel the mercy you will be shown, so that you may be comforted, so that you may feel like a child of God, so that you may be refreshed by light, love, water, bread, companionship and grace every day. So that you may sense the kin-dom/realm of God near and, so that, every now and then, if you are awake, you may see the face of God inside and beside you.

Question (Minister & Leader together): *to student*

[Name], do you hear the call to the journey?

Do you know you are free to make this life of ministry your own; free of any expectations from us who have made the journey before you?

Do you know you are free to be fed and sustained by the work of your hands, heart and life?

Student: I do

PART 4: Empowering by Joining

The student turns to face congregation; Minister & Leaders circle the student and lay hands on them/him/her. Parents/Partner/Family joins the circle, if present.

Minister:

The Apostle Paul called and commended Timothy and Phoebe as apprentices in ministry. In that tradition, this congregation wants to join with you, [Name], in your journey. Whether or not you choose to pursue ordination, you are on a path to minister to the world as one of us. We will support you in prayer, encouragement, reminders and solace when you need it.

Elder:

There are many gifts, many ways of serving God, many paths of ministry.

As you search out your path, we commit to remain faithful to our path right here.

For it is in sharing our stories of learning, stories of discovery, stories of reconciliation and stories of grace that we best support one another.

Question from Minister -- *asking members of the congregation/church:*

Members and Friends of [name of local church], do you commit to support [Name] in prayer, encouragement, reminders and solace whenever and however possible?

Congregation: We do

Question from Elder -- *asking members of the congregation/church:*

Members and Friends of [name of local church], do you commit to remain faithful to our shared ministry right here? Collecting our stories of redemption, reconciliation and grace along the way?

Congregation: We do

PART 5: Prayer

Minister/Leader 1:

to the congregation

You are invited to share in this laying of hands by holding hands where you are.

This prayer will end with a unison portion [that will be on the screens/printed on your service sheet, so keep it near to hand].

Pray with me.

With a deep yearning for your [realm/kin-dom], O God, we celebrate [Name]'s path of seminary studies.

Prayer continues on next page.

Commissioning Service for a new seminary student

Written by Rev. Dr. Barb Wilkins-Crowder for a service at Cairn Christian
Church, Lafayette, Colorado USA

[Name] = name of seminary student

PART 1 - Introduction

Invite all participants forward.

President/[Leader/Secretary] of the Congregation

Today we celebrate, bless and commission [Name].

[Name] started/will start their/his/her seminary studies at
[Name of seminary/Bible college/ university] on [date studies
commence].

Today we lift up their/his/her journey and commitment and
declare ourselves to be their/his/her supporting congregation.

[Name] is pursuing [Degree]. [Include explanation of Degree]

[Name]'s goal for themselves/himself/herself, right now, is to [e.g.
work towards ordination; study to explore their/his/her faith;
explore questions of faith]

Today we want to empower you, [Name], for your seminary
career.

Do you [Name] ask for the support and partnership of this
congregation as you learn what seminary will teach you and
discern your path of ministry?

Student: I do.

PART 2 - Empowering by Calling

Chair of Elders/other leader in the congregation

We start with a reminder of the Great Commission we all
share, to support the journey to discipleship in ourselves and
in others.

Today we remind you [*speaking to the student*], [Name], and
ourselves, of the support-ministry to which we are all called.
May you learn how to be kind in the face of grumbly-ness,
gentle in the waves of resistance, steady in the crush of needs
and loving - always.

Minister

May you be a mentor to those who are searching, may you be
a fellow learner with those who question and may you be ever
patient with those who need to move around and challenge
and push back on their faith.

Question from Elder or Minister, or two voices together:

[Name] do you hear the call to support others in their paths of
discipleship?

Student: I do

PART 3: Empowering by Honouring & Letting Go

Minister:

Ministry, whether in pastoral work, community organizing or
social justice advocacy, is a marathon, not a sprint.
Thus/therefore, we also remind you today of the Beatitudes.
For you will have days when you are poor in spirit, days when
you will mourn, seasons when you will feel meek and years
when you will hunger and thirst for righteousness.
Be empowered this day and every day with a marathoner's
conviction that *the journey* will be your real ministry.