

An Annotated Suggested Order for a new Healing Service

“Healing is not a plastering over of a defective personality, bought to notice by a physical or mental disorder, but a renewal of the whole person in the light of truth.” Martin S Israel.

(If this quote is thought to be too heavy it could go after the end of the service.)

(PRE-LIMINAL SECTION) **NOTE 1** (*notes are at the end of this document*)

A Welcoming greeting *informal*

Opening Sentence: *Setting a positive, hopeful tone.*

e.g. “Come unto me all who travail and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.”
Matt 11.28.
“I am with you always, yes, to the end of time.”
Matt 28.20.
“By his wounds you have been healed.”
1Peter 2.24.

Opening Hymn: *Of Confidence in God. (Traditional hymns may be more re-assuring at this point.)*

e.g. Praise my soul the King of heaven
All my hope on God is founded
Breathe on me breath of God
Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart

Verse: *Declaration of our intent to allow change.*

e.g. Breathe on us, breath of God:

Response: *Indicating group assent.*

e.g. **fill us with your saving power.**

Gathering Prayer: *Covering the essentials.*

e.g. **Almighty God,**
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Readings: Scriptural or non-scriptural followed by a Gospel reading. Or Gospel read first.

e.g. Extract from Maria Boulding followed by Mark 2.1-11. This Maria Boulding extract could be in the printed service but not necessarily used every time. It is a good piece just for folk to ponder on.

A reading from *Gateway to Hope* by Maria Boulding.

'Though God is an almighty lover, he can find himself shut out, and he longs to find an open door of vulnerability in us. It is extraordinarily hard for us to realise this, conditioned as we are by a secular ethic of success and a religious ideal of moral perfection which may owe little to the gospel. God calls us, implants his life in the deepest centre of our being at baptism, and loves us into growth. He does not propose to us some lofty, rigid ideal to which we must attain by our own unaided human resources. We are more sinful than we know, more deeply flawed than we can recognise by any human insight; but grace works in us in the deepest places of body and spirit. We must live from our weakness, from the barren places of our need, because there is the spring of grace and the source of our strength When we stand before God in the truth of our need, acknowledging our sinfulness and bankruptcy, then we can celebrate his mercy. Then we are living by grace, and we can allow full scope to his joy.'

A moment of silence is kept

The Gospel:

Address: *not very long, educative, inspirational, aspirational, humorous*

Group affirmation: *Traditional or new*

e.g. 'Gloria in Excelsis' or 'Blessing of the Light'

Either **Gloria in Excelsis** (modern form)

NOTE 2

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.

Amen.

Or Blessing of the Light

All remain standing. A large candle is lit, as a sign of hope and

possibility. As the candle is lit, these words are said

Blessed are you. God of compassion and mercy.

to you be praise and glory for ever!

Your resurrection light breaks forth in the darkness;

your healing grace brings life and hope.

As we trust in the gift of your saving help.

guide us with your Spirit

and open our lips to sing your praise.

now and for ever.

Amen.

Come to God, for God is light:

God's light overcomes darkness.

Come to God, for God is truth:

God's truth leads to freedom.

Come to God, for God is love:

God's love comforts and enfold us.

(LIMINAL SECTION)

NOTE 3

Throughout this section fresh, new, less well-known or unexpected materials are appropriate.

Absolution *'Us' and 'our' are said by those who are not ordained priest: words in italics indicate the points where changes may be necessary.*

e.g. Almighty God,
who in Jesus Christ has given you
a kingdom that cannot be destroyed,
forgive you your sins,
open your eyes to God's truth,
strengthen you to do God's will
and give you the joy of his kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Or May the God of love and power
forgive you and free you from your sins,
heal and strengthen you by his Spirit,
and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Confession

e.g. **God our Father,
long-suffering, full of grace and truth,
you create us from nothing and give us life.
You give your faithful people new life in the water of baptism.
You do not turn your face from us,
nor cast us aside.
We confess that we have sinned
against you and our neighbour.
We have wounded your love and marred your image in us.
Restore us for the sake of your Son,
and bring us to heavenly joy,
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen**

Prayers of Intercession *as a litany, thereby demonstrating all are involved in interceding*

e.g. Holy God, in whom we live and move and have our being, we make our prayer to you:
Grant to all who seek you the assurance of your presence, your power and your peace:

Lord, hear our prayer.

Grant your healing grace to all who are sick that they may be made whole in body, mind and spirit

Lord, hear our prayer.

Grant to all who minister to the suffering wisdom and skill, sympathy and patience:

Lord, hear our prayer.

Sustain and support the anxious and fearful and lift up all who are brought low:

Lord, hear our prayer.

Hear us. Lord of life.

Heal us, and make us whole.

A period of silence follows when the leader may share the first names of people who have asked for prayer at this service. Those attending may add other first names.

Hymn *of active change (Modern or lesser known ones are appropriate here.)*

e.g. Be still, for the presence of the Lord
O God, by whose almighty plan
Almighty Father, who for us thy Son didst give

(Optional) **Anointing** *to be done by a priest* "Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit."

NOTE 4

or

"N, I anoint you in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. May his enlightening grace flow through you; through your heart and mind, body and soul, bringing peace, strength and healing now and in the days and weeks to come. Amen."

or

“N, I anoint you in the name of God who gives you life. Receive Christ’s forgiveness, his healing and his love. May the Father or our Lord Jesus Christ grant you the riches of his grace, his wholeness and his peace.”

(Scriptural references to anointing include: Exodus 30.22-25, Mark 6.13 & James 5.14.)

Laying on of hands *to be offered by, at least, pairs of ministers*

(New Testament references to this include: Mk. 5.23; 6.5; Acts 6.6; 8.17f; 9.17; 13.3; 19.6; 1 Tim. 4.14; 5.22; 2 Tim. 1.6; Heb. 6.2; cf. Mk. 16.18.)

e.g. “Christ bring you wholeness of body, mind and spirit, deliver you from every evil, and give you his peace. Amen.”

or “X, In the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ, who laid his hands upon the sick that they may be healed we lay our hands upon you. May almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit make you whole in body, mind and spirit and give you light and peace. Amen.”

Conclude ministry with

Almighty God,
whose Son revealed in signs and miracles
the wonder of your saving presence:
renew [N,N, ... and] all your people
with your heavenly grace,
and in all our weakness
sustain us by your mighty power.
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

(POST-LIMINAL SECTION)

Positive and future orientated

An Act of Thanksgiving *telling what has taken place with tone of praise & joy.*

e.g. Blessed are you, Sovereign God,
gentle and merciful.
creator of heaven and earth.
Your word brought light out of darkness.
In Christ Jesus you bring good news to the poor.
liberty to captives, sight to the blind
and freedom for the oppressed.

Daily your Spirit renews the face of the earth.
bringing life and health, wholeness and peace.
In the renewal of our lives
you make known your heavenly glory.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Blessed be God for ever.

Hymn *of Praise, of Thanksgiving, Resurrection, of mystical communion.*

e.g. Angel-voices ever singing
 And can it be that I should gain
 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord

Notices

e.g. future meetings for healing, teaching or fellowship.

Sending out with

either **Priestly Blessing**

e.g.

The God of love travel with you on your way;
the risen Christ be your company;
the holy Spirit lift up your life;
and the blessing of God almighty,
Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,
rest upon you and remain with you,
now and for ever.

Amen

or All join hands and share the Grace:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.

Go, in peace, to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ. Amen.

NOTES 5 & 6

Notes on Annotated order of service

I have endeavoured to construct a service that can be taken by traditionalists or modernists that may benefit all parties.

1 Below is an introduction to the thinking behind the structure of the suggested new healing service, taken from page 16 of *Staging Posts: Rites of passage for Contemporary Christians* by the Revd Professor Roger Grainger.

“Generally speaking, pre-liminal services tend to look forward and post-liminal ones backward, whereas liminal services concentrate hard upon the present. At the same time, each service expresses all three perspectives by means of its basic shape as a rite of passage, so that to this extent each service is complete in itself, for even though they are intended to be regarded as sketches or suggestions rather than blueprints, a definite effort has been made in all to preserve the all-important tripartite shape of the rite upon which so much of its meaning depends.

(1) The PRE-LIMINAL movement. This separates the individual or individuals directly concerned, clarifies the purpose or intention of the rite, and identifies the idea behind it, distinguishing what is going to happen from all other possible events. It takes the form of a statement of intention which is publicly announced or proclaimed. In rites of passage associated with developed religions this part tends to be more propositional in form than the following sections, including verbal explanation and the use of evidence in the form of personal or scriptural testimony about the state of affairs which exists at present and the historical circumstances leading up to it.

(2) The central position is occupied by some kind of symbolic action or series of actions signifying the nature of the experience undergone by the central characters, those most intimately and directly concerned. As the rite is a symbol of existential change of a profound kind, - a crucial change - images of pain and conflict, an awareness of human need in circumstances of uncertainty and disorder are introduced at this point. An essential component is the loneliness of individuals and their need for personal relationship. This is the motif of disintegration, the LIMINAL rite.

(3) Finally, in the consummation of the ritual, the moment of personal truth having been lived through at the deepest, most intimate level, God's acceptance of the individual's new existential position is celebrated as public fact, something to be shared with others and incorporated in the on-going life of the community. This, the POST-LIMINAL movement of reintegration, is celebrated by hymns, prayers, and dances involving everybody present. The rite, which has moved inwards to the centre, now moves outwards again, underlining the intensely personal nature of the experience which lives at its heart.

To repeat what I said before, there is nothing new in all this. It is simply the age-old eloquence of the rite of pass-age adapted to our modern need for flexibility and a certain amount of brevity. The fact that the underlying structure is so amazingly adaptable should encourage us to experiment as freely as we want, or feel called, to do."

2 The Either/Or options allow the president to use either a more traditional appropriate item or a more modern piece. Hymns may be either old or new.

3 Here is the only likely part that people may object to: the placing of the Absolution ahead of the Confession. I have deliberately done this for four reasons.

1. The meaning of the word forgiveness is love that is given even before any offence is acknowledged. Martin Israel & Ken McAll both taught me this. Jesus asked for God's forgiveness of those who crucified him. "And Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'" Luke 23: 34, before his persecutors had succeeded in their intent. The mystics teach us that this is indeed so.

2. Theologians and pastors are now beginning to teach this and at least one priest regularly acts in this order with his congregations (Heard on radio 4).

3. Liminality: the break-up of previous norms. See Note 1 (2).

By changing the order we are not only entertaining the idea of change but undergoing it.

4. The Abbey/Convent/LEP is in the vanguard of the churches' forward momentum.

4 From Wikipedia:

The Catholic Church sees the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick as giving grace for the state into which people enter through sickness. Through the sacrament a gift of the Holy Spirit is given, that renews confidence and faith in God and strengthens against temptations to discouragement, despair and anguish at the thought of death and the struggle of death; it prevents from losing Christian hope in God's justice, truth and salvation.

The special grace of the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick has as its effects:

the uniting of the sick person to the passion of Christ, for his own good and that of the whole Church;

the strengthening, peace, and courage to endure, in a Christian manner, the sufferings of illness or old age;

the forgiveness of sins, if the sick person was not able to obtain it through the sacrament of penance;

the restoration of health, if it is conducive to the salvation of his soul;

the preparation for passing over to eternal life.

5 Virtually every word (obviously not the secular reading) used in this order of service is taken from the main Common Worship book. I have endeavoured to construct a service that can be led by traditionalists or modernists that may benefit all parties.

6 Works consulted:

Fr Eric Fisher

Revd Prof Roger Grainger

Main Common Worship book

The Methodist Service book

Derby Cathedral healing service, October 2005

A New Zealand Prayer book

CFPSS Resources booklet

Common Worship Pastoral Services

Staging Posts, Roger Grainger

The Language of the Rite, Roger Grainger

The Study of Liturgy, Jones, Wainwright & Yarnold

Alternative Futures for Worship, Vol 4, Reconciliation ed: Fink

Alternative Futures for Worship, Vol 7, Anointing of the Sick ed: Fink

Hymns Ancient & Modern New Standard

Complete Anglican Hymns Old & New