

THE GROUP FOR LOCAL UNITY'S GUIDELINES FOR THE INDUCTION OF A MINISTER IN A LOCAL ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP

The Group for Local Unity (GLU) of Churches Together in England offers these guidelines for those who arrange the induction of a priest or minister in a Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP). These notes are intended to cover most of the great variety of LEPs which range from Several Congregations in Covenanted Partnerships to joint or united congregations served by a single minister (Single Congregation Partnerships).

The word "Induction" is used here to embrace the variety of procedures and practices when a new Minister joins a Local Ecumenical Partnership, whether Commissioning, Licensing, Institution, Installation, Authorisation, Welcome, or Induction.

In the case of the United Reformed Church, "Inducting Minister" and "Ordaining Minister" should be taken to mean the *Presiding* Minister within the context of the District Council.

The words "Appointed" and "Appointment" are used here to embrace the variety of perceptions of Call, Stationing, Presentation, or Appointment.

I. PREPARATION AND CONSULTATION

The appointing Church should liaise with both the Sponsoring Body and representatives of the LEP as soon as an appointment has been agreed, decide together about the date for the induction, and decide which partner church representatives are required. Furthermore, if the new minister shares responsibility in a Group, Team, Circuit or Parish with other lay or ordained people then they should be consulted .

The requirements will involve some or a combination of the following :-

Inducting Minister, Leader of Worship, Preacher and Representatives of other sponsoring Churches. Additionally there may be a celebration of the Eucharist, or an ordination. The allocation of the leading of prayer, the reading of scripture etc. to LEP members or to those from outside needs to be carefully balanced. Invitations to attend should also be sent to representatives of neighbouring Churches of all denominations and of the local civic and voluntary bodies.

II. THE APPOINTING CHURCH AND THE INDUCTING MINISTER

- (a) The nature of the appointing Church will determine who the Inducting Minister will be, and the nature of the appointment may also determine the structure of the service. It is to be expected that aspects of an induction service in one place will be different from aspects of an induction service in another, reflecting the particular relationships and structures of the Churches involved in that LEP.
- (b) The Inducting Minister should represent the authority of the Church making the appointment :
for an **Anglican** it will be the Bishop and/or Archdeacon;

for a **Baptist** it will be an Officer of the Regional Association;
for a **Methodist** it will be the Circuit Superintendent or District Chairman;
for a **Roman Catholic** it will be the Bishop or the appropriate person
delegated by him;
for the **United Reformed Church** it will be the Provincial Moderator or
his/her deputy.

- (c) The formal Induction will be conducted according to the requirements of the appointing Church so that the main authority for appointment is clear.

Certain Churches may provide for some of the undertakings required by the new minister to be made before witnesses prior to the service. Reference to that fact should then be made during the course of the service.

An **Anglican** priest will be instituted to the Cure of Souls of the benefice as Rector or Vicar (incumbent) by the Bishop or his commissary, and also inducted by the Archdeacon or his deputy. However, many of the Anglican appointments to LEPs are now made without the freehold by licensing as Team Vicar or, if the benefice is suspended, as priest in charge.

Since **Methodist** ministers are stationed to the Circuit by the Conference, the service in a Church in the Circuit is a service of Welcome and not Induction.

In the case of a **Roman Catholic** priest the appointment is by a letter from the Bishop, stating the date from which this becomes effective. The Induction Service may follow some time later.

A **United Reformed Church** induction service takes place in the context of a properly constituted meeting of the District Council.

There is a form of induction service for joint Methodist/URC Churches in the Appendix to *Patterns of Sharing*, 1990, published by the Methodist/URC Liaison Committee. The publication points out that when a URC Minister in pastoral charge of a joint congregation is "Recognised and Regarded" or "Authorised to Serve" by Methodist Conference, or when a Methodist minister in pastoral charge of such a congregation is authorised by URC procedures, it is appropriate for both Welcoming and Induction to take place.

III. THE CONDUCT OF WORSHIP

- (a) The Leader of Worship may be a member of the LEP, or a minister other than the Inducting Minister or the President at the Eucharist.
- (b) The President at the Eucharist may be the Inducting Minister (almost invariably for a Roman Catholic, normally for an Anglican); or the newly inducted minister, the Leader of Worship, or another minister.
- (c) If the service is to include the Ordination of the new minister, the Inducting Minister will normally be the Ordaining Minister.

IV. THE RE-AFFIRMATION OF THE LEP

To begin the act of induction, the Declaration of Intent or Covenant should be read aloud and re-affirmed by members of the LEP and the sponsoring Churches.

After denominational requirements of the Induction have been completed, the new minister should affirm and sign the Declaration/Covenant duly witnessed by representatives of the LEP and the Sponsoring Body.

V. DECLARATIONS BY PARTNER CHURCHES

Following the Act of Induction, Declarations should be made and Welcomes given.

The **Anglican** Bishop or his representative should declare the authorizations and provisions made under Canons B43 and B44.

A recognised representative of the **Baptist Regional Association** should declare the recognition of ministry agreed in the constitution of the LEP.

If the new minister is *Recognised and Regarded* or *Authorised to Serve* by the Conference as a **Methodist** minister, he or she should be welcomed in this capacity by the Chairman of the District or the Circuit Superintendent.

Recognition by the **United Reformed Church** should be declared by a recognised representative of the District Council.

VI. GREETINGS AND WELCOME TO THE NEW MINISTER

An opportunity should be provided within the service for representatives of partner Churches and other bodies to offer brief greetings and welcome.

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