



This order is adapted from Blessing and Sending for Mission (ELW Occasional Services for the Assembly, p. 159). This blessing and sending is intended for use when individuals or groups are sent from the assembly to participate in public witness through advocacy, protest, or solidarity actions as an expression of their baptismal faith. Such witness may take the form of persuasion, resistance, or accompaniment, depending on the occasion and context.

This order may precede the blessing and dismissal in a congregation's primary service, or it may be adapted and used independently. Singing may be used as desired, either around the scripture reading and prayers, or as the rite begins or concludes. A list of possible hymns and songs is provided.

Introduction

The leader addresses the assembly, adapting these words for the occasion.

Beloved in Christ: In holy baptism, we are called to "[bear] God's creative and redeeming word to all the world" (ELW, p. 231). Today we bless and send these *siblings/co-laborers in the gospel/members of this assembly* as they go forth to embody that call through public witness.

Scripture

One or more of the following or another appropriate scripture passage may be read.

A reading from Isaiah: Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, "Here I am." (Isa. 58:6-9a)

A reading from Micah: "With what shall I come before the LORD and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:6-8)

A reading from Luke: When [Jesus] came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:16-21)

Commentary and Prayer

Brief comments may follow about the form of public witness for which those being blessed will be sent.

The following or another appropriate prayer is said.

Blessed are you, O Holy One,
for you formed us in love, claimed us in baptism,
and set us free for lives of service and witness.

Strengthen us to fulfill the promises of baptism—
to proclaim Christ through word and deed,
to care for others and the world you made,
and to work for justice and peace.

The leader continues with one or more of the following petitions, adapting as appropriate. Each reflects a distinct posture of public witness: persuasion (advocacy), resistance (protest), and accompaniment (solidarity actions).

Advocacy (e.g., visits to legislators, public testimony, letter-writing campaigns)

Bless those who go forth to speak truth with clarity and courage.
Let their words be reflections of your mercy,
their cause be grounded in your justice,
and their witness be a sign of your peace.

Protest (e.g., marches, walkouts, boycotts, nonviolent resistance, public confrontation of injustice)

Bless those who disturb the peace that protects the powerful.
Let justice roll through their voices and their footsteps,
and may their disruptive presence be a sign of your reign breaking into this world.

Solidarity actions (e.g., vigils, peace walks, accompaniment of vulnerable communities, mutual aid)

Bless those who accompany others with compassion.
Let their steadying presence be a shelter in weary places,
and their faithful witness be a sign of your solidarity with all who suffer.

The prayer concludes:

To you, O God,
Source of life, Companion on the way, Fire of the Spirit,
be all glory and praise, now and forever.

Amen.

The service concludes with the blessing and the dismissal.

Additional Notes

This rite affirms public witness as a faithful expression of baptismal vocation and a tangible participation in God's mission of justice, mercy, and peace. Modeled after Blessing and Sending for Mission, it provides language and structure for blessing and sending individuals or groups engaged in advocacy, protest, or solidarity actions. The prayers and petitions draw from a wide range of scriptural sources that lift up prophetic truth-telling, accompaniment of the vulnerable, and courageous confrontation of injustice. The rite may be adapted for various settings—within the Sunday assembly or as part of preparation for public events. The trinitarian doxology and scriptural options reinforce the conviction that the church's call to public witness is rooted in God's justice-making love, revealed in Christ and sustained by the Spirit.

Psalms and canticles may include the following.

Psalm 10	<i>Rise up, O LORD; lift up your hand, O God; do not forget the afflicted.</i> (Ps. 10:12)
Psalm 27	<i>This I believe—that I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living!</i> (Ps. 27:13)
Psalm 37	<i>Turn from evil, and do good, and dwell securely forever.</i> (Ps. 37:27)
Psalm 46	<i>God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.</i> (Ps. 46:1)
Psalm 72	<i>Let [the king] defend the needy among the people, rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor.</i> (Ps. 72:4)
Psalm 94	<i>Can a seat of injustice be allied with you, one which frames evil into law?</i> (Ps. 94:20)
Psalm 103	<i>O LORD, you provide vindication and justice for all who are oppressed.</i> (Ps. 103:6)
Luke 1:46-55	<i>[God] has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly.</i> (Luke 1:52)

Scripture readings may include the following.

Exodus 5:1-2 [3—6:1]	<i>Moses demands justice from Pharaoh</i>
Esther 4:10-17	<i>Esther risks everything for such a time as this</i>
Isaiah 58:1-14	<i>True worship is justice, not ritual fasting alone</i>
Jeremiah 7:1-7	<i>Stand at the gate and call for justice</i>
Jeremiah 22:1-5	<i>Do justice, protect the vulnerable from oppression</i>
Daniel 3:[1-12] 13-18	<i>Refusal to bow, resistance even unto death</i>
Amos 5:21-24	<i>God desires justice, not empty religious performance</i>
Micah 6:6-8	<i>Do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with God</i>
Matthew 5:1-12	<i>Blessed are those who hunger for righteousness</i>
Matthew 10:16-22	<i>Sent like sheep into the midst of wolves</i>
Matthew 25:31-46	<i>The judgment of the nations</i>
Mark 11:15-19	<i>Jesus overturns tables in protest at the temple</i>
Mark 13:6-13	<i>The Spirit provides words to speak</i>
Luke 4:16-21 [22-30]	<i>Jesus proclaims liberation, fulfilling the words of the prophets</i>
Luke 10:25-37	<i>The neighbor is the one who acts to save and preserve life</i>
Acts 4:13-20	<i>We cannot keep from speaking God's truth</i>
Romans 12:9-21	<i>Overcome evil with good, live peaceably with all</i>
2 Corinthians 4:7-12	<i>Resistance amid struggle</i>
Ephesians 6:10-18	<i>Put on God's armor and stand for justice</i>
Hebrews [11:1-40] 12:1-2	<i>We belong to a great cloud of witnesses</i>
James 2:14-26	<i>Faith without action is lifeless and empty</i>

Hymns may include the following. Additional options can be found under the headings *Creation, Stewardship; Freedom; Justice, Peace*; or other categories.

ELW 239	Hark, the Glad Sound!
ELW 251	My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness
ELW 311	Hail to the Lord's Anointed
ELW 325, TFF 66	I Want Jesus to Walk with Me
ELW 418	Rejoice in God's Saints
ELW 479	We Come to the Hungry Feast
ELW 546	To Be Your Presence
ELW 551	The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve
ELW 572	Now It Is Evening
ELW 573	My Soul Now Magnifies the Lord
ELW 579	Lord, You Give the Great Commission
ELW 580	How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord
ELW 633, TFF 197	We've Come This Far by Faith
ELW 705	God of Grace and God of Glory
ELW 706	The People Walk / <i>Un pueblo que camina</i>
ELW 708, TFF 83	Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love
ELW 709	When Our Song Says Peace
ELW 710	Let Streams of Living Justice
ELW 712	Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service
ELW 713	O God of Every Nation
ELW 717	Let Justice Flow Like Streams
ELW 723	Canticle of the Turning
ELW 724	All Who Love and Serve Your City
ELW 751	O Lord, Hear My Prayer
ELW 753	Dona Nobis Pacem
ELW 768, TFF 70	Lead Me, Guide me
ELW 882	My Soul Does Magnify the Lord
ACS 903, TFF 46	Freedom Is Coming
ACS 904	Come to Be Our Hope, O Jesus / <i>Tú, Jesús, nuestra Esperanza</i> <i>/ Vem, Jesus, nossa Esperança</i>
ACS 905	We Are Waiting for Jesus
ACS 907	Filled with Hope and Gratitude
ACS 918	Now Is the Time of Grace
ACS 921	Return to God
ACS 928	Pave the Way with Branches
ACS 939	Touch that Soothes and Heals
ACS 949	Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning
ACS 968	Feed Us with Hunger for Justice
ACS 969, TFF 263	Welcome Table
ACS 984	May the God of Hope Go with Us / <i>Dios de la esperanza</i>
ACS 987, TFF 153	Guide My Feet
ACS 989	Let Your Peace Rain Upon Us / <i>Yarabba ssalami</i>
ACS 1000	God's Work, Our Hands
ACS 1003	For Such a Time as This
ACS 1027	Don't Be Afraid
ACS 1033	Nothing Can Trouble / <i>Nada te turbe</i>

ACS 1035	Though the Earth Shall Change
ACS 1036	Commonwealth Is God's Commandment
ACS 1037	Christ, Our Peace
ACS 1038	God, We Gather as Your People
ACS 1051	For the Troubles and the Sufferings / <i>Pelas dores deste mundo</i>
ACS 1052	When Our World Is Rent by Violence
ACS 1056	God Bless to Us Our Bread/ <i>Bendice, Señor, nuestro pan</i>
ACS 1057	What Does the Lord Require of You?
ACS 1058	Let Not the Needy Be Forgotten
ACS 1059	Come Now, You Blessed
ACS 1060	Gentle Joseph Heard a Warning
ACS 1062	Build a Longer Table
ACS 1077	Mercy, We Abide in You
ACS 1078	There Is a Longing in Our Hearts

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