

SIX O’CLOCK SERVICE

A SHORT GUIDE FOR INTERCESSORS

Thank you for agreeing to serve as an intercessor for the evening service. Your partnership in this ministry is greatly appreciated. We have prepared this guide to help you get better acquainted with your responsibilities.

A very important part of the weekly liturgy is the intercessions or “Prayers of the People.” They are important as prayers on behalf of the Church. They are also important as the hinge of the liturgy, moving us from the Liturgy of the Word to the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Some people prefer to read prayers that they have written, others prefer to base them on short notes. Given the length and complexity of these prayers, you are encouraged to prayerfully think through your prayers well in advance and, if possible, write them out.

THE SHAPE AND CONTENT OF THE PRAYERS

As you prepare to lead the intercessions, begin by praying for guidance for yourself and your preparations. Start with the main categories and the weekly wrap (more on this below) and use other resources to help you to make notes on content. Make sure your prayers are clear and specific, but also that you are praying for something that others can assent to, so that they can respond with confidence.

In general, the shape of the intercessions follows a 5-part pattern: 1) the Church, 2) the world, 3) the local community/family/friends 4) the sick, and 5) the departed. This is a good model of intercessory prayer and can (or even should) be used even in your private prayer life. At Christ Church, we add a little more specificity to this basic model and ask the intercessors to pray for:

- the Church, bishops, and clergy
- Annual Cycle of Prayer for the Nations of the World
- Diocesan Calendar
- any other specific prayer concerns
- Christ Church: activities, Six O’clock Service
- for the sick and any others who are in need
- for the departed and those in mourning

Under these general headings, you might like to include other categories as well:

- the universal Church, its members and mission
- this nation and all in civic authority
- the welfare of the world
- concerns of the local community

You will find the specific petitions for each of these categories on the weekly wrap (usually emailed out on Thursday). Also, general outline suggestions can be found in *Common Worship* (the black prayer book, pages 101-110) or *Common Worship Daily Prayer* (the red book found at the front of the Church—just ask!). As you read other prayers and consider

the categories of content for the prayers, you might want to write down specific phrases or ideas that you feel should be included. Such notes can help you as begin to write out the prayers.

THE FORM OF THE PRAYERS

Once you have the content of your prayers gathered, you will need to begin fashioning the prayers themselves. Again, make sure your prayers are both clear and specific.

You will want to begin the prayers by inviting everyone to pray with you. It is common to begin a prayer by thanking God for his many provisions to his people, but this will vary with the form of prayer you choose. You can then begin to make your specific intercessions.

In the Anglican tradition, after each category of intercessions, it is common to use a bidding statement (call) and response. *Common Worship* indicates two:

INTERCESSOR:	Lord in your mercy...	or	INTERCESSOR:	Lord, hear us...
PEOPLE:	Hear our prayer.		PEOPLE:	Lord, graciously hear us.

Whichever response has been used, you should end the intercessions with the following, so that those praying with you will know the intercessions are concluding:

INTERCESSOR:	Merciful Father...
PEOPLE:	...accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

It is also somewhat common to ask the congregation present to offer their own prayers. If you want to leave a short silence in which people are invited to bring their own prayers, you might like to introduce it, saying: "We will now have a moment for you to pray silently or out loud." Again, project your voice. You can do this generally (toward the end of the prayer) or specifically related to the prayers for the sick and those in need.

SAYING THE PRAYERS

The intercessions typically follow shortly after the sermon. So be ready! Before you start you will hear the celebrant say something like: "Let us pray for the Church and the world and let us thank God for his goodness..." As he begins to say this, you should make your way to the front of the sanctuary and take your place at the microphone. You may wish to make a small bow or nod of the head towards the altar as you arrive and leave the sanctuary. A lectern will be available, so please make use of it for your notes. You can begin your prayers as soon as you are comfortable. When you are finished, quietly make your back to your seat.

While we do use a microphone, you will still need to project your voice. Practice before the service, if possible. It may feel that you are speaking loudly but you need to project your voice so that those in the back are able to hear. At the same time, be careful that your tone does not come across as harsh. This will come with practice over time. Ask someone for feedback.

Thank you again for your willingness to serve in this way. Please let us know if you have any questions. We are grateful to be partnering in ministry with you.