

Liturgy to celebrate the beginning of a Period of Discernment

Acknowledgement: this liturgy was created by Habitat Uniting Church and may be used or modified freely.

Preparation: a pot, some earth and some bulbs or seeds are used as signs of new life, depending on the time of year.

*Responses of the congregation are shown below **in bold**.*

Chairperson of congregation, or another appropriate leader of the congregation:

Friends, today we celebrate the faith journey of [name] and commission [him/her] as [she/he] begins a Period of Discernment with the Uniting Church Presbytery of [presbytery name].

The Period of Discernment is a process that enables members together with the church to discern God's call on their life, and to explore in which forms this call to ministry may be expressed. All people are invited to respond to God's love in faith and are called to join in the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ. This ministry may be discerned to be as a lay person within the local congregation, within the community or workplace, or within one of the specified and ordained ministries of the church. During the coming year, [name] will be supported in developing [her/his] relationship with God, the church community and [his/her] self-understanding of as a Christian disciple. Together with church, [name] will seek to discern [his/her] gifts and graces for ministry and the type of ministry in which these gifts and graces may be expressed. There will be opportunity for biblical and theological study, some study in ministry and mission, and field education ministry experience.

[Name] is invited to share [her/his] story

We journey here with [name] in solidarity.

[He/She] is a member of the Body of Christ.

We journey with [name] in hope.

We support [her/his] journey with love and with grace.

[He/She] is standing on a threshold, a doorway, in liminal space.

[Name], are you ready to begin the Period of Discernment?

[Name]: Yes, with God as my Guide I am ready.

[Name], in this period of discernment, and in all things,
May you know yourself to be a beloved [son/daughter] of God,
Growing in faith as a disciple of Jesus Christ,
Filled with the Holy Spirit as your guide and strength.
We surround you with prayer.

Some moments of silence are held, or members of the congregation are invited to offer prayer for [name].

To you, the community of [congregation] Uniting Church,
I commend [name] in this period of discernment.
Continue to uphold [her/him] in your prayers,
Encourage [him/her] in [his/her] discernment and
Support [her/him] by welcoming [her/his] ministry amongst us.

*A pot, some earth and some bulbs or seeds are brought forward as signs of new life.
The earth is poured into the pot and the bulbs or seeds pushed deep.*

Chairperson of congregation:

Accept this gift, a pot budding with new life and potential.

Even when the journey may seem dark and lonely,

Know that you have the support of this community.

We look forward to witnessing the flowering of your faith and clarity in ministry.

Amen.