

Congregational House of Refuge Representative Commissioning and Installation

This order of service is set within the Divine Service before the Prayer of the Church or preceding the Prayers in the Daily Office. This rite may also be used in other settings (e.g., at a meeting of a congregational auxiliary). In that case, it may begin with the Invocation. The Lord's Prayer then should be inserted immediately prior to the dismissal/blessing. Appropriate hymns may be sung before or at the conclusion of the rite. The pastor of the congregation serves as the presiding minister. Those who are to begin service to the congregation are presented before the pastor. The pastor, standing before the altar if the rite is used in the church, announces the names of those who will be recognized, and he may greet each one individually with a handshake.

The pastor addresses the workers:

P Dear brother/sister in Christ, you have been appointed to serve our Lord as the House of Refuge representative at (name of congregation). Through this vocation you will facilitate surrounding and supporting neighbors experiencing surprise pregnancy as we witness to the sanctity of every human life with compassion and courage. Hear what instruction and encouragement Holy Scripture declares concerning those who thus serve Christ's Church:

One or more of the following passages from Holy Scripture are read.

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

Romans 12:3-8

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

Colossians 3:23-24

Then the righteous will answer him, saying, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?" And the King will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."

Matthew 25:37-40

P You have the affirmation and trust of this congregation's leadership as well as the alliance and solidarity of the nationwide Lutherans For Life and House of Refuge communities. As ambassador and liaison both to and for them, and as agent of our Lord's own activity among us, we ask you to engage us in relationships as a safe place and welcoming fellowship especially for everyone carrying children.

P Will you serve as the primary point of contact with those who accept these invitations to find refuge in our fellowship?

R *Yes, with the help of God.*

P Will you assist in coordinating the resources and services they require for their pregnancy and parenting?

R *Yes, with the help of God.*

P Will you exemplify the House of Refuge character, rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep (Rom. 12:15), receiving one another as Christ Jesus, and refraining from both ridicule and disregard?

R *Yes, by the grace of God.*

P Finally, will you remain regular in prayer, fervent in worship, attentive to the Scriptures, steadfast in confession, and earnest in the celebration of all the Gospel's blessings?

R *Yes, by the grace of God.*

The pastor addresses the assembly:

P Beloved in the Lord, you have heard the solemn promises of this congregation's House of Refuge representative. I ask you now, in the presence of God: Will you support him/her in his/her labors, remember him/her in your prayers, and work with them to the best of the abilities God has given you, so that we may enjoy and embody the Gospel of Jesus Christ in this place?

C We will, with the help of God.

The pastor addresses the servants:

P Dear (name of representative candidate), in the presence of Almighty God and of this congregation, I commission you to serve as House of Refuge representative at (name

of congregation) in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

P Let us pray.

P Almighty and everlasting God, according your great mercy and grace You gave Your Son to take on flesh in the womb and dwell among us that we might have life and have it abundantly. As He now enters with forgiveness and resurrection into every human affliction for rescue from our own weaknesses and wrongs, let your favor rest upon the House of Refuge activities of this congregation. Make our communion a place of safety and strength for everyone experiencing surprise pregnancy. Bless especially the labors of our House of Refuge representative, (name), that he/she find sustenance, effectiveness, and fulfillment from Your almighty hand. Impart Your Holy Spirit to this witness and work so that daily bread distributes to each child and parent as they have need and we receive one another as gifts, privileges, sisters, and brothers. Keep us faithful together to delight in the everlasting inheritance You promise to all who trust in the name and salvation of our Savior, even Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

P Go in the name of the Lord. Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. Be confident that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. The almighty and most merciful God, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve you.

1 Corinthians 15:58; Philippians 1:6