Planning an Installation Service
For many years it has been customary within the tradition of Lutheran churches to mark the call of a pastor to a new ministry setting by celebrating with a service of installation. While most often the new ministry setting was a congregation, an installation service has also typically been used to mark the beginning of a pastor’s ministry in other settings, ranging from service as a chaplain to service as the chief executive of a church-related social ministry organization. More recently, an increasing number of social ministry organizations have used a service of installation to celebrate the beginning of the work of lay persons who have been selected to lead the organizations. They have found that an installation service can be an important opportunity to publicly affirm the organization’s mission, to clearly identify the new CEO as the one selected by the board of directors to fill the leadership role, and to provide a ritualized opportunity for the organization, the community and the new leader to make commitments to each other.

Installation services can, in these ways, be very valuable experiences. They can effectively be used when a chaplain is called to serve in a social ministry organization, when a pastor or other rostered person is called to serve as CEO, or when a lay person is called to a leadership role.

Lutheran Services in America (LSA) encourages its member organizations to consider an installation service whenever a new chief executive, chaplain or other senior leader begins their work. LSA often receives inquiries regarding the appropriateness of an installation service and how best to design one. This resource has been produced in response to such questions.

An installation service is a time to gather representatives from districts/synods, congregations, the board of directors, staff members, volunteers and clients or residents, to give thanks for the work of the organization and celebrate a
new chapter in that work. The installing official can be the bishop or district
president, the chair of the board, or another appropriate person. It should be
celebrated at a time when the largest, most inclusive group is likely to be able to
attend. It’s a time for all stakeholders to celebrate together!

This guide includes a brief article that describes the purpose and liturgical
structure of an installation service, followed by four installation service outlines
that provide good models. LSA is indebted to the Rev. Dr. Mark W. Oldenburg,
Steck-Miller Professor of the Art of Worship and Dean of the Chapel at the
Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg, PA for writing the opening article,
and to the many social ministry organizations who shared copies of installation
services. The four sample installation services were chosen to illustrate a variety
of possible settings. Sample 1 was used for the installation of a lay person as
CEO. Sample 2 was also for the installation of a layperson as CEO, but with the
rite of installation embedded in a broader service of the Word. Sample 3 was
used for the installation of a pastor as CEO and inserted the rite of installation
into a service of Word and Sacrament. Sample 4 was used for the installation of
a pastor as chaplain of a social ministry organization. In each case, identifying
information was removed so that the samples can be used as generic outlines.
These worship outlines are provided as samples, and not as normative for
each situation. Worship planners in each local setting will need to determine
the liturgical options that best suit their context. By including as many of the
elements suggested by Dr. Oldenburg as possible, the installation service will be
made most meaningful.
What Is an Installation Service and Why Should We Do One?

BY THE REV. DR. MARK W. OLDENBURG

Until a few years ago it seemed that only church workers and home appliances were “installed.” This led to some rather lame jokes at receptions (“Well, we’ve got you plugged into the hot water and the drain now!”) and some real misconceptions. For instance, appliances are pretty much interchangeable – one new Maytag Compact Washer (model MAH2400A) is pretty much identical to any other. And installing a home appliance doesn’t really change either the home or the appliance. They’re just connected now. The same is not true of workers and officers who are installed. They certainly aren’t interchangeable with all other possible candidates. Nor do they, or the organization, remain unchanged by being brought together.

That’s why we’re luckier now, since we have another and better (still not perfect, but better) use of “installation”. It’s now not only church workers and home appliances that are installed, but computer software. And that installation is a more complicated procedure than installing an appliance, mostly because installing software on a system requires changes not only in the software, but in the system. The two are not only connected, but adapted to one another.

Workers and organizations, too, are both changed when they’re connected. The worker has different responsibilities; the organization has new abilities; there will be new ways to communicate within the organization’s structure. That those changes are happening is one of the things recognized publicly at an installation. Neither the one installed nor the organization is exactly the same once the person is in place.

Certainly that’s recognized in the ceremony of installation. But there are other truths recognized, and other things going on as well. Looking at what goes into such a ceremony might help bring those to the service.

While services for the installation of pastors, diaconal ministers, deaconesses, certified lay church workers, associates in ministry, or unrostered lay people are different, they are similar enough to talk about together. Certain items appear in almost all of them:

- A presentation of the installee, with reference to that person’s appointment;
- A description of the position that person will be filling, with passages from the New Testament related to ministry within the church;
Questioning of the installee, regarding their faith and intentions;
Questioning of the people assembled, regarding their willingness to work with
the installee;
Announcement of installation and the acclamation of the community
Blessing of the installee
Prayers for the work of the installee, the organization, and the whole church.
The presentation of symbols of the person’s service may also be part of the ceremony.

Just by its form and content, the service of installation will, therefore, do several things:

It will provide an opportunity for the organization to reaffirm its mission, since
that is implied in the description of the position, and often stated in the prayers.

It will recognize and honor the work of those who sought out a person who
could honestly and capably make the promises included in the service.

It will affirm the mutuality of the relationship between the person being in-
stalled and the people present at the installation – other staff, board members,
clients, and other stake-holders. The installee promises to be faithful to the
trust shown in offering the position; everyone else promises to work together
with that person to accomplish the mission of the organization. By applause and
by prayer, the community expresses its support.

It will declare that God and the church are intimately involved and interested
in the work of this person and the organization. The prayers, once more, will at
least imply that that interest is on-going. Indeed, the service’s similarity to rites
which take place in congregations will imply that the life of this organization is,
itself, an expression of the church and a way of carrying out the mission of God.

Especially where there has been a difficult transition, the service will help
cement the movement of this person now into this office.

Even when the transition has been natural and easy, beginning the relationship with
public, common affirmation and prayer is not simply an empty form. Humans seem to
be created in such a way that we are moved by ritual. Not only can rituals be emotional-
ly important (why do you think that we cry at weddings, even of people who have been
living together for years?), they also seem to help with the movement of people from
one social role to another. Of course it is not true that, unless he is installed, a person
is not really a chaplain. But being installed does seem to help settle him into that role,
in his eyes and in those of others. As a rite of passage, it won’t magically accomplish an
improvement in communication and mutual support. But it will help.
This installation rite was preceded by an opening prayer, a hymn, and a brief reflection on the history of the organization. A response from the new CEO followed the installation.

(Name), we welcome you as the new executive director of (organization) and we look forward to this public installation calling you forward to be blessed for ministry with people who are hurting, neglected, and oppressed in (area of the state). They may be elderly and alone, young and troubled, disabled and left out of society, formerly incarcerated and rejected, or homeless and hopeless. We, representatives of the sponsoring church bodies, members of the board and congregations, fellow staff members and workers at (organization), community partners and public officials, are gathered here to send you forth with the blessing of God, with our prayers, and with our support.

One of the biblical passages most energizing to the work of (organization) is the word of the prophet Micah: “He has told you 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 6:8

Important to us, too, is that this kingdom of God, of doing what is good, what is just, what is kind, what is humble, has come near to us in Jesus – empowering now our own work and ministry.

Do you, (installee), a servant of the Lord, intend to carry on this ministry of Micah and Jesus?

I do so intend with the help of God.

The prophet tells us that God requires us to do justice. (Organization) understands justice as “fulfilling the demands of right relationships in community”. Do you intend to be an instrument of right relationships among all people; regardless of race and creed, rich and poor, female and male, able-bodied and disabled, young and old?

I do so intend with the help of God.
The prophets call us to be, and to do, shalom in word and in deed. We at (organization) understand shalom to be peace and well-being in all of its dimensions: to experience safety, security and shelter, physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. Do you intend to clothe yourself in shalom and touch people’s lives with well-being?

I do so intend with the help of God.

The prophet Amos calls for “justice to roll down like the waters and righteousness like a never-ending stream”. This is no easy task to walk humbly with God, to be faithful day in and day out, to have courage and conviction, to be human and to rely finally on the Lord in this ministry with people in their need.

(Installee), may the Spirit of Jesus rest upon you with power to do that which is good, that which is just, that which is kind; and may God’s Spirit empower you to live in God’s service with the people of (region/state).

With the help of God, so will I live and serve.

And do you, co-workers, members of sponsoring bodies, board and congregation members, family and friends, community partners and public servants, intend to find strength to be supportive and helpful to (installee), that we may together be instruments of justice and well-being in God’s world?

We do so intend with the help of God.

The peace and well-being of the Lord be with you, (installee).

Amen.

The peace and well-being of the Lord be with all of us.

Amen.

The installee may be greeted with applause. Prayers for the installee, the organization, the church, and the world may follow.
Rite of Installation of a Layperson as CEO, embedded in a service of the Word

Prelude
Welcome
Opening Hymn
Invocation
Confession and Forgiveness
Greeting and Peace
Hymn of Praise
Prayer of the Day
First Lesson: Romans 12:4-8

Psalm 72:1-7

Alleluia

Gospel: Matthew 25:14-23

Sermon

Hymn of the Day

Installation:
I ask my colleagues now serving on the (organization) Board of Directors to please rise. On behalf of the Board of Directors of (organization), I present (installee) for installation as President.

Let us pray. Almighty and ever-living God, you call us to lives of witness and service. Now you have called this your servant. Fill her with wisdom and patience, with love, and with faithfulness to your Word, that she may with gladness serve
you as President of (organization) and that she may stir in each one of us a life of faithful service to others, through your son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Installee), you know the specific duties that pertain to the presidency of (organization). In order that we might know your mind and will, do you accept this office to which you have been elected?

Yes I do, with the help of God.

Will you endeavor to discharge the duties of your office to the glory of God and in accordance with the Articles and By-Laws of (organization) and in loving concern for all who join you in this undertaking?

Yes I do, with the help of God.

As chair of the (organization) Board of Directors, it is my great pleasure to install you in the office of President of (organization) in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

It is fitting that on this occasion we affirm the mission of (organization) and express our gratitude for all who support its life and work.

(We ask all staff and volunteers, including foster parents, to please rise.)

Responding to the redemptive work of Christ, we affirm our mission of enabling people to grow in intimacy with God, themselves, family, and others by providing opportunities to experience wholeness, reconciliation, and fullness of life.

Congregation please rise.

We thank God for the ministries of (organization). We are grateful to you, servants of God, for your commitment, your vision, and your tireless energy in bringing hope and healing to so many lives. As you continue your call of service, we pledge our prayers and support so that individuals, families, and communities in (state) may be strengthened.

Loving God, we thank you for (organization), for all who respond to your call to serve through its many ministries, for its leadership among board, staff, and volunteers. We pray for all whose lives are touched. We ask your blessing as we continue to work for peace and justice in our world. In Christ’s name. Amen.

Offering
Offertory Prayer

Prayers of the People (Prayers are offered for the installee, the organization, the church, and the world).

Benediction

Dismissal

Closing Hymn
Prelude
Welcome and Greetings
Entrance Hymn
Apostolic Greeting
Prayer of the Day
First Lesson: Isaiah 43:15-19a
Psalm 137:1-17
Second Lesson: II Corinthians 4:7-11
Alleluia Verse
Gospel: Mark 4:35-41
Sermon
Hymn of the Day

Rite of Installation:
Having been authorized by the Church to install (installlee), our co-worker in the Gospel, as Pastor and Executive Director, I now ask for certification of his appointment.

We, of (organization), after prayerful deliberation, have elected (installlee) to be Pastor and Executive Director. I present him for installation.

Our Lord Jesus Christ says: “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you. Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” – John 20:21-23

And again, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all
that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.” — Matthew 28:18-20

Hear the words addressed to Timothy: “Set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Till I come, attend to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the council of elders laid their hands upon you. Practice these duties, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. Take heed to yourself and to your teaching; hold to that, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.” — 1 Timothy 4:12-16

Pastor (name), in the presence of this congregation will you commit yourself to this new trust and responsibility, and promise to discharge your duties in harmony with the constitutions of the church?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you preach and teach in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you love, serve, and pray for God’s people? Will you nourish them with the Word and Holy Sacraments, leading them by your own example in the use of the means of grace, in faithful service and holy living?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you give faithful witness in the world, that God’s love may be known in all that you do?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

Almighty God, who has given you the will to do these things, graciously give you the strength and compassion to perform them.

Amen

And you, people of God, will you receive this messenger of Jesus Christ, sent by God to serve God’s people with the Gospel of hope and salvation? Will you regard him as a servant of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God?

We will.

Will you pray for him, help and honor him for his work’s sake, and in all things strive to live together in the peace and unity of Christ?
We will.

The office of Pastor and Executive Director of (organization) is now committed to you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever.

Amen

Prayers of the Church

Receive these signs of the calling to serve the Lord and his people in the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

Chaplains come forward to present to the Pastor and Executive Director a bible, a chalice and paten, and a hard hat.

The Bishop's Representative and the Board Chair welcome the Pastor and Executive Director. The congregation may offer acclamation with applause.

Sharing of the Peace

Offering

Offertory Prayer

Great Thanksgiving

Lord's Prayer

Canticle

Distribution of Holy Communion

Benediction

Closing Hymn

Dismissal

Postlude
Prelude
Welcome
Greeting
Opening Hymn
Prayer of the Day
Scripture Reading: Romans 12:4-18
Special Music
Gospel
Message
Apostles’ Creed
Installation:
Promises of the Chaplain

Promises of the People: And you the people of God, will you receive this messenger of Jesus Christ, sent by God to serve God’s people with the Gospel of hope and salvation? Will you regard her as a servant of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God?

We will.

And will you pray for her, help and honor her for her work’s sake, and in all things strive to live together in the peace and unity of Christ?

We will.

The office of Chaplain of (organization) is now committed to you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayers of the People and Lord’s Prayer
Blessing

Closing Hymn