

SURFACE TO SOUL

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Commissioning Vision Teams

When church leaders are being deployed for service at or beyond the church, it is important that they be commissioned to:

- Recognize this significant event or chapter in ministry.
- Affirm the congregation's commitment to engage in this initiative.
- Rejoice and give thanks to God for what God has done and will do.

In most cases, the commissioning occurs during one or more worship services. The pastor publicly affirms the people and the purpose of the commission and invites members to declare their support.

Commissioning services may include:

- A song to be sung or special music.
- A scripture passage to be read that relates to the purpose of the commissioning,
- Responsive readings and/or a laying on of hands accompanied by prayer.
- A video or a brief overview of the initiative and how it will unfold in the upcoming months.
- Comments by one or more team members who are being commissioned.
- A reception to meet people who are commissioned or to learn more about the initiative.

Sample Charge to the Congregation

Pastor: Today, we have the joy of commissioning five of our members to help us discern who we are as a congregation, what we have to offer our local and global community, and how we might build deeper connections among people, beyond the walls of our church.

Board Chair: This morning we are commissioning John, Stu, Rebekah, Megan, and Luke to guide our discovering, discerning, and dreaming process. In partnership with members and leaders of this church, they will gather information, prepare reports, share learning with the congregation, and then craft a plan for how we might be faithful to God's dreams for our congregation and community.

Pastor or Chair: Members of this _____ team have said yes to commitment, and now, I invite them to turn toward the congregation and respond to this question (often more than 1 question). "Do you commit to carry out God's work and to help our congregation be faithful to its present and future mission?" If so, say, "We do."

Team: "We do."

Chair: [Turn to the church]. If you're a member of this church, or someone who is here out of a commitment to love God, love others, and help fulfill God's mission, please stand with me and respond to the following questions. Friends, do you commit to supporting the Vision Team with prayer, friendship, and helpfulness, not forgetting that you are extensions of our Council and the (church name) family? If so, say, "We do."

Members: "We do".

Pastor: We want to invite family members, elders, and those that have committed to care for these families to come forward and lay hands on them now. (The pastor may read a brief passage and then offer a prayer).

Pastor: As a final indicator of your ongoing support, I invite the congregation to express its gratitude by providing a round of applause for the work of this team (pastor starts clapping - the team returns to their seats following the applause).

Take a picture of the team; post it on the church website and Facebook page.

Acknowledge the formation of the team in your church's Council/Board meeting minutes.



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