

Commissioning and Blessing of Lay Deputies and Alternates to the Convention of the Diocese

This service fits well at the conclusion of the Prayers of the People at celebrations of Holy Communion or the Daily Office. It may, however, be included at any time in the Liturgy, or used separately.

The Officiant may be a priest, deacon, or lay leader such as a Warden, vestry member, or other officer (current or past). The Officiant should not, however, be one of the Lay Deputies or Alternates.

Italicized text should be adjusted for person, or omitted if inapplicable.

The Lay Deputy or Deputies, and any Alternate(s) is/are invited to come forward and face the Congregation.

Officiant Brothers and Sisters, the grace and gifts of God are bestowed on us because of Jesus Christ, whose Body is the Church. In baptism we are made members of Christ and members of one another. Set free from the law of death to learn and follow the law of life, we live no longer for ourselves, but for God in Christ. The Holy Spirit endows us with gifts to enable us to fulfill the roles to which we are called, and, when the members of the Body work together in love, to grow to the full stature of Christ. To this end, the Holy Spirit has led this Communion to retain with gratitude an Ordered church, and to entrust to each Order — of the Laity, Deacons, Priests, and Bishops — its own part in the work of discerning those called to the Order of Bishops.

Having sought humbly the will of God, this congregation has, in turn, set aside *these persons*, who have consented to participate in the work of discerning God's choice for the next Bishop of Albany.

Let us pray.

The Prayer in Time of Transition may be recited in unison or responsively as shown below.

Officiant Heavenly Father,

**ALL we praise and thank you for this, your diocese of Albany.
Inspire and sustain us in this time of transition.**

Officiant Incline our hearts to do your will, and so direct us in your ways that the leader you are raising up to be our Bishop will find here joyful disciples, making disciples: united in faith, unflagging in hope, and steeped in mutual charity.

**ALL In your mercy, accept our repentance, and grant us peace;
look with patience on our enthusiasms.**

Pour rich gifts and grace

**upon all who are entrusted with the ongoing work of your church;
so that, with diligence and charity,
we may discern correctly and walk righteously in your ways.**

The Officiant addresses all those being commissioned.

Officiant N., N., and N., (*state the name each Lay Deputy in turn*),
you have been set aside to be the presence of this congregation
at the next meeting of the Convention of this diocese.

N., N., and N., (*state the name each Alternate, if any, in turn*),
you have been set aside in readiness to be, if needed, the presence of this congregation
at the next meeting of the Convention of this diocese.

The Officiant then examines all those being commissioned.

The Respondents answer for themselves only. They may respond together in unison, or sequentially.

Have you spiritually prepared for this work through prayer, spiritual discipline, and study of the Word of God?

Respondents *I have.*

Officiant Have you diligently and prayerfully considered the statements, achievements, capabilities, aptitudes, and potential of the candidates?

Respondents *I have.*

The celebrant addresses the Lay Deputies:

Officiant Will you participate in the counsels of this Diocese, approaching this solemn charge with an open mind and heart, seeking not your own interest or that of any party, but only to do the will of God for the good of this diocese, with sincere charity toward all with whom you will pray and work?

Respondents *I will, with God's help.*

The celebrant addresses the Alternates:

Officiant Will you hold yourself in readiness to respond when called to participate in the counsels of this Diocese, approaching this solemn charge with an open mind and heart, seeking not your own interest or that of any party, but only to do the will of God for the good of this diocese, with sincere charity toward all with whom you will pray and work?

Respondents *I will, with God's help.*

The celebrant addresses the Congregation:

Officiant Will all of you support *these persons* in the fulfillment of *their* call, duties, and office?
ALL **We will.**

Officiant Will you pray for *them* daily, and for the Convention and candidates?
ALL **We will.**

Officiant Will you love and assist *them* in practical ways as *they* devote *themselves* to this work?
ALL **We will.**

The Officiant then prays:

Officiant Then let us pray.

All pray in silence for a time; the Officiant then continues

Eternal God, the foundation of all wisdom and the source of all courage: Enlighten with your grace *these* your beloved and faithful *servants*. So rule *their minds*, so direct *their hearts*, so guide *their counsels*, so provide for *their needs*, that in all things *they* may seek your glory and promote the mission of your Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ALL **Amen.**

A priest officiating may bless the Deputy/Deputies and any Alternates during the following prayer; else all simply make the sign of the cross over themselves.

Officiant Then in the name of God and of *(name of church or congregation)* we commission and send you, *(name(s) of Deputies)* as Lay *Deputies*, and you *(name(s) of Alternates)* as *Alternates*, in the name of the Father, ✠ and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Go in peace. May God grant you every gift, fill you with joy, and inspire you with gratitude and awe for what you are about to witness and do.