

LIVING WHOLEHEARTEDLY AS FOLLOWERS OF JESUS FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD



Ministry of Healing Sunday

SERVICE GUIDE 2024



THE METHODIST CHURCH
IN IRELAND

IRISHMETHODIST.ORG

Service Guide



INTRODUCTION

SUNDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2024

The Ministry of Healing Committee presented 2 papers to the Methodist Church in Ireland Conference held in Belfast in June 2022. These papers – **“A Framework for Practice of the Ministry of Healing in the Methodist Church in Ireland”** and **“The Christian Healing Ministry”** were adopted by Conference. Other resources, including these papers, are available on the MCI Resources Archive website under the Ministry of Healing section - irishmethodist.org/resources-ministry-of-healing

All such papers should be consulted, and opportunities taken up to attend Healing Ministry Training are available by the MCI Ministries of Learning and Development in various District Circuits locations.

In planning a Ministry of Healing Service, there should be a clear understanding that we are living in a fallen, broken world. We ALL need healing, and this should be made apparent in the service. It is not only about being released from sickness.

“Healing may also be spiritual, a restoration of the soul. Sin is the ultimate sickness eating at the core of the soul, but spilling out on our physical, mental, social and moral wellbeing. Healing from sin comes from a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ”. (Source: Touchpoint Bible).

The following Ministry of Healing Service liturgy is taken from such a perspective, using material sourced mainly from the Mennonite Community and the Iona Community.

The service can be used as it stands, or as the basis of your own service, where you can change, add or omit elements of the order to suit your own congregation or situation. In any event, we would encourage you to mark the Ministry of Healing Sunday in some way.



AN ORDER OF SERVICE FOR MINISTRY OF HEALING SUNDAY

WELCOME

This should be used to explain the format of the Healing Service, what people can expect, and to put people, especially those who may not be regular Church attenders, at ease.

Two minutes silence when we welcome the Presence of the Holy Spirit.



CALL TO WORSHIP

God comes into a world filled with uncertainties and darkness.

God seeks out the voids of belief and conviction.

God embraces the wounded and broken.

God knocks down the walls of division and strife.

God is the light shining in the darkness of our days.

God is the light of our lives.

God is the one who makes all things new.

Praise be to God now and forevermore.

(Source: Peter K. Perry)



OPENING HYMN

O Christ the Healer (Fred Pratt Green)

(Tune: O Waly Waly)



OPENING PRAYER

Loving God whose touch can heal the broken places of life, touch us today.
God of peace whose spirit of peace can quiet our spirits of confusion and despair
reassure us today.

Forgiving God, whose call to repentance promises grace upon grace, place your mercy in
our souls today.

You who heals the sick and liberates the imprisoned, who brings justice in the midst of
oppression and strength in the midst of weakness, pour out your Spirit of power upon us
today.

Open our hearts to new faithfulness, redirect our waywardness and hold us gently in
your goodness.

We confess our needs to you... (PAUSE)
and we turn to you with hearts filled with hope, remembering the promises you have
made to us.

May we be filled through the glorious presence of the fullness of God's healing and
wholeness.

(Source: Mennonite Community)



ALL AGE TALK



VIDEO

Dealing with Pain (Video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0hnEP2768c>

Jesus is with us in the good times and the bad. We're going to sing about how we can
trust Jesus to watch over us and guide us.



HYMN

The Lord's My Shepherd (Stuart Townend)



POSSIBLE SCRIPTURES FOR REFLECTION

- Psalm 30
- Psalm 103
- Mark 1: 29-39
- Luke 7:18-23
- John 9: 1-7
- James 5: 13-16

REFLECTION

Healing has so many facets – physical healing, emotional healing, mental healing, spiritual healing, healing of relationships, etc. All are important, and these days, we often talk about “wholeness” rather than focussing on one type of healing.

In the Bible, the subject of healing is rarely dealt with in isolation – it is usually linked with things like obedience, forgiveness, faith, and demonic deliverance. We’re all familiar with Proverbs 3:5-6: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” But the two verses after it are relevant to our discussion:

“Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.”

So physical health is associated with trusting the Lord, submitting to the Lord, fearing the Lord and shunning evil.

The most important type of healing is, of course, spiritual healing, the healing of the broken relationship between God and people. It comes from the forgiveness of sins, which is made possible through Jesus’ atonement. We might call this “getting right with God” or “making peace with God” and it is the entry point to a new life in Christ.

In the gospels, Jesus announced the kingdom of God was near, and several characteristics accompanied his preaching that stood out from other preachers of the day. His teaching carried a strong note of authority.

Various miracles authenticated His message, in particular driving out demons and physical healing of the sick. In some cases, these went hand in hand – when the demon was expelled, the physical sickness left, indicating that there was a spiritual cause behind the physical condition.

At one point, Jesus sent out his twelve apostles on a mission trip to preach the good news of the kingdom. And He gave them authority to drive out demons and heal people, even to the extent of raising the dead.

Later on, perhaps to show that the twelve weren't unique and that this ministry wasn't confined to them, He sent seventy-two others, in a similar way, to preach the message of the kingdom, to drive out demons and to heal the sick.

Then at the end of Mark's gospel, just to show that the twelve and the seventy-two weren't unique, Jesus commissioned His disciples to preach the good news and told them that they should expect future converts to do certain things. These future converts would drive out demons, speak in new tongues, pick up snakes with their hands, drink deadly poison, and place their hands on sick people who would get well as a result.

The context doesn't prove that every future convert should do all these things (and I doubt if many chose to drink deadly poison or pick up snakes!) but the point is that incidents of demonic deliverance, speaking in tongues, and healing miracles were expected to continue beyond the time of Jesus and the first apostles.

Jesus' atonement gives complete forgiveness of sins to all who believe in Him – instant spiritual healing if you like. There is also an aspect of physical healing to Jesus' atonement, though it doesn't work the same way as spiritual healing. We don't receive instant physical healing when we place our trust in Jesus, but we are promised bodily healing when we die, or if the Lord returns before then. At that time, our bodies will be transformed into glorified heavenly bodies that won't get sick again.

In the meantime, what measure of physical healing can we expect, as Christian believers? The New Testament gives us three main contexts for divine healing within the Christian church.

The first context is healing as a sign

Mark 16 describes healings and other dramatic phenomena as signs. These signs grab the attention of the listeners and authenticate the message. A sign always points to something, and in this case, it points to Jesus, to the good news of the gospel, to the message of the kingdom. So, we should expect to see healing miracles in the context of evangelistic preaching – and we still do today.

I think we can go further than this though, because if people outside the church hear about or see healing miracles within the normal functioning of the body of Christ, this could also be a sign to them. So, I wouldn't restrict the healings promised in Mark 16 to evangelistic crusades.

The second context is healing as a gift

Even though God did extraordinary healing miracles through Paul, strangely enough, he doesn't write a lot about healing in his 13 letters. The exception is 1 Corinthians 12 where he talks about "gifts of healing". A "gift of healing" can refer to a once-off healing event (a gift from God), or it can refer to someone who has a particular gifting in the area of healing. The body of Christ is made up of people with different gifts and abilities, and we all work together for the good of the body, and we all need each other.

So, there are gifted teachers, gifted administrators, gifted worship leaders, etc., and there should also be gifted healers and gifted workers of miracles. It might be a niche ministry,

but it should exist in some form or another. But that doesn't mean that 'ordinary' Christians shouldn't be involved in the ministry of healing.

In Ephesians 4, the job of the five-fold ministers (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) is to prepare God's people for works of service, so the body of Christ may be built up. In other words, a gifted evangelist, for example, will not only evangelise, but he or she will train up others to evangelise to some extent.

By the same token, we shouldn't confine all the healing to the gifted healers, we should use them to train "ordinary" believers to exercise a healing ministry.

The third context is healing as a ministry

This is found in James 5:14-16. You might be puzzled as to why James advises a sick person to call the elders of the church. Why doesn't he tell them to call a gifted healer? Perhaps gifted healers were thin on the ground, which is all the more reason why more Christians should get some training in this area.

In poor countries, a qualified doctor is often not available to treat a sick person, and the next best thing is someone who has some training and experience in treating sick people. Likewise, if a gifted and experienced healer isn't available in the local church, the next best thing is someone who has some training and experience in praying for sick people. In James' model, the elders of the church are called – and notice the initiative lies with the sick person to call them - if you are sick, you have a responsibility to seek healing. Don't wait for the elders to hear about it on the grapevine!

The elders had spiritual oversight of a local congregation, and there were strict qualifications in order to be an elder, which might explain the final sentence: "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."

They were to pray over the sick person in faith and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. Oil is associated with the Holy Spirit and also had medicinal uses at the time. Confession and forgiveness are also mentioned, which is important because unforgiveness can be a blockage to healing. This might be another reason why this is a task for the elders – they could be trusted with hearing confessions without breaking confidentiality.

There's quite a lot of implications from all this in terms of how we implement the ministry of healing in the Methodist Church. For those who want to explore it further, the Ministry of Healing Committee is happy to give advice and recommend appropriate training.



HYMN

Jesus Lover of My Soul (Charles Wesley)



PRAYER OF PETITION

From fears that paralyse us; **Heal us O Lord**
From illness that strangles us; **Heal us O Lord**
From sorrows that weigh us down; **Heal us O Lord**
From aimlessness that plagues our visions; **Heal us O Lord**

(Source: Katherine Hawker)

Congregation members are now invited to be ushered to the front of the Church to receive an individual blessing from the Prayer Ministry Team members. The blessing is:

In the name of Jesus Christ, may the healing power of the Holy Spirit make you whole and keep you secure, working in you according to His most loving will. AMEN.

(Source: Dorothy Kerin)

The Prayer Ministry Team members will also bless each other.

TIME OF QUIET REFLECTION

with soft background music playing while the blessing takes place and people are returning to their seats.



PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice. (Phil. 4:4)

Silence

Full of joy for what the Lord has been doing through us, let the light of joy shine out now.

Silence

Bless the Lord, O my soul, let all that is in me bless His Holy Name. (Psalm 103:1)

Silence

Let us now share with each other what the Lord has done for us
(a time when people are free to speak to each other if they wish to do so).

Bless the Lord, O my soul and forget not all His goodness.
Lord, into Your hands we commit our lives, and the lives of all our loved ones.
To God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be praise and glory today and forever.
AMEN.

(Source: Iona Community)



CLOSING HYMN

My Heart is Filled with Thankfulness (Getty & Townsend)



CLOSING PRAYER

In darkness and in light, in trouble and in joy, help us Heavenly Father, to trust Your love, to serve Your purpose and praise Your name. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(Source: Daily Office)

BENEDICTION

All: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. AMEN.

AFTER SERVICE MINISTRY

Prayer Ministry Team members (in teams of 2) to be available for people wishing to avail of individual prayer.

Also available – Anointing with oil using the following words:

In Jesus' name, I sign with the cross, as a seal of what Jesus had begun in you today. Amen.



POSSIBLE HYMNS AND WORSHIP SONGS

- **Bless the Lord, O My Soul** (Matt Redman)
- **By Faith, We See the Hand of God** (Getty & Townend)
- **Be Still for the Presence of the Lord** (David Evans)
- **In Christ Alone** (Stuart Townend)
- **Be Still and Know that I am God** (Anon.)
- **O Love That Will Not Let Me Go** (George Matheson)
- **May the Mind of Christ My Saviour** (Kate Barclay Wilkinson)

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