

Lord Jesus
Thank you
For all the good things you have given me,
For all the pains and insults you took in my
place.

Most merciful Lord
My Redeemer
My friend
My brother

May I
Know you more clearly
Love you more dearly
Follow you more nearly

For no other reason
Except your love for me
Sir Richard, Bishop of Chichester
(1197 – 1253)

It is so simple, Lord,
Yet I spend so much of my life avoiding it.

I fret and worry, rather than ask;
I expect things to fall into my lap rather than
seek;

I stand with my hands behind my back
Rigidly independent, rather than
knock on
Heaven's door.

Teach me, Lord, to trust, to move
To lose my stubborn independence
So that I can ask, seek and knock as you
intended.

See St Matthew 7:7



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The Church of Scotland
The Stewartry of Strathearn
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Making your Profession of Faith



THE STEWARTRY OF STRATHEARN

(Aberdalgie, Aberuthven, Dunning, Forteviot)

MAKING YOUR PROFESSION OF FAITH

We are delighted that you have decided to make profession of your Christian Faith. This leaflet explains the setting for this and sets out the questions which are used during the service.

Profession of Faith is a celebration of your belonging within the Church of Jesus Christ. In past times it was often called “joining the Church” but that was a misleading phrase. As a baptised person you are not a stranger coming in from outside. You are already a member by the grace of God because Jesus has done for you all that is necessary to be a child of God. What you are doing now is saying “Yes!” to it all. A son or daughter does not join the family at their coming of age party – they celebrate their belonging and as mature people set their own seal on what has been given to them through the years. They assume equal responsibility with the other members of the family.

Before making profession of your Christian faith it is likely that you will have been part of an enquirer’s group or “Communicants’ Class”. The purpose of the group will have been to concentrate the mind, to give time to looking at some aspects of the faith. As you can appreciate the surface has only been scratched but it may be that a door has been opened just a little for you to explore the vast world of Christian belief, spirituality and worship Church history etc. The minister will be only too happy

to point you in the direction of further study. In no sense is Profession of Faith a statement that “I now know it all”. The Faith is a mystery of God’s love which we can never box up and at its heart is a relationship not a set of theories. In that sense, Profession of Faith involves trust – a willingness to say, “There’s a lot I don’t understand but somehow I believe I hear the Lord’s voice calling me and as a free mature person I am willing to trust him. I will take my stand as a Christian. I believe he decided for me long ago; now I decided for him”.

What part does the Church play in all this? The Christian Faith is a faith held in common by a community – it is not a lonely journey but one undertaken by pilgrims together. So it is important that your Profession is not something done in a corner but is to be celebrated by the family of believers. They will pledge their support for you as companions of the way and, in turn, they will be greatly encouraged by the stand you are taking with them.

In practical terms for the Church of Scotland, Profession of Faith means that you become a member of a congregation. As we have said, you already belong to the Church by Baptism but Profession of Faith results in your name being added to the congregational roll – the list of local disciples upon whom the Church relies if the Gospel is to be proclaimed and lived out in a parish.

For us here, the Church of Scotland congregation is The Stewartry of Strathearn. As a member you will probably join in the life and worship of one of our area churches particularly; but do remember that there are four churches within our group and you are equally welcome at any centre.

Profession of Faith will normally take place at the Eucharist (Holy Communion). This is because it is at the Sacrament that we are most aware of what our Lord has done for us and offered to God on our behalf: so our own offering of faith finds its proper route to God through the great offering of Jesus. After the Word part of the service (the Bible readings

and the sermon) and just before the Communion we present our own offerings – money offerings, bread and wine and any other offerings we want to present to God. This may include a special dedication of a gift or the offering of service by youth workers etc. It is at this point that you offer your profession. The minister will invite you to come to the front of the Church. He will introduce this part of the service and will then ask the questions appointed by the Church. Please remember that these questions are not a test (“Say ‘Yes’ to these and we might let you in!”) or in any way intended to be a burden – quite the opposite, they are designed as a means whereby you can make your profession. Each person will respond “I do” in turn. After the questions there is a short prayer and a blessing given to each person. As a token of welcome to membership of the congregation, the minister will then invite the elders present to come forward and shake your hand. After this you will return to your seats and the service proceeds.

Do you believe in One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and do you confess Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord?

Do you promise to join regularly with your fellow Christians in worship on the Lord’s Day?

Do you promise to be faithful in reading the Bible and in prayer?

Do you promise to give a fitting proportion of your time, talents and money for the Church’s work in the world?

Do you promise, depending on the grace of God, to profess publicly your loyalty to Jesus Christ, to serve him in your daily work and to walk in his ways all the days of your life?
