

The Founding of a Church

BREAKING GROUND

from

The Book of Occasional Services

I certify this booklet conforms with the office of “The Founding of a Church, Breaking Ground” from the 2020 edition of the Book of Occasional Services of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

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I. BREAKING GROUND

¶ Before the service four stakes may be set in the ground at the four corners of the proposed building. And three cords may be prepared, two to extend diagonally from corner to corner, a third to enclose the space. A spade shall be placed at the site of the Altar.

¶ The Bishop, or a Priest appointed by him, shall officiate. Having vested nearby, the Ministers shall go in procession, with the people, to the site of the new Church, singing or saying the Prayer Book Litany or the Litany for the Church. Then an appointed Minister shall read the Lesson, as follows.

Hear these words from the First Book of Chronicles.

From 1 Chronicles 21 and 22

THE angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the Lord in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. And David went up at the saying of Gad, which he spake in the Name of the Lord. Then David said to Ornan, Grant me the place of this threshing floor, that I may build an altar therein unto the Lord. And Ornan said to David, Take it to thee, and let my lord the king do that which is good in his eyes: lo, I give it all. And king David said to Ornan, Nay, but I will verily buy it for the full price: for I will not take that which is thine for the Lord, nor offer burnt offerings without cost. So David gave Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight. Then David said, The house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnificent; I will therefore now make preparation for it. Then he called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build an house for the Lord God of Israel.

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¶ *Here may follow a Hymn, and an Instruction or Sermon. Then, while the following Antiphon and Psalm are being sung or said, appointed laymen may stretch the two cords diagonally, from the northeast to the southwest, and from the southeast to the northwest, securing them to the stakes, thus forming the Greek letter X, the symbol both of the Cross and of the name of Christ, across the space.*

Antiphon. Thou son of man, show the house to the house of Israel, * and let them measure the pattern.

Memento, Domine from Psalm 132

LORD, remember David,
And all his trouble.

How he sware unto the Lord,
And vowed a vow unto the Almighty God of Jacob.

I will not come within the tabernacle of mine house,
Nor climb up into my bed;

I will not suffer mine eyes to sleep, nor mine eyelids to slumber;

Neither the temples of my head to take any rest;
Until I find out a place for the temple of the Lord;
An habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.

Arise, O Lord, into thy resting-place;
Thou, and the ark of thy strength.

Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness;
And let thy saints sing with joyfulness.

For thy servant David's sake.

Turn not away the face of thine anointed.

For the Lord hath chosen Sion to be an habitation for himself;
He hath longed for her.

This shall be my rest for ever;

Here will I dwell for I have a delight therein.

I will deck her priests with health,

And her saints will rejoice and sing.

There shall I make the horn of David to flourish:

I have ordained a lantern for mine anointed.

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Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

¶ *During the following Antiphon and Psalm the laymen may stretch the third cord completely around the four stakes, enclosing the area, moving clockwise, beginning and ending at the southeast. If convenient, the Ministers and people may follow in procession.*

Antiphon. We have a strong city; * salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

Magnus Dominus. from Psalm 48

GREAT is the Lord, and highly to be praised,
In the city of our God, even upon his holy hill.

The hill of Zion is a fair place, and the joy of the whole earth;

Upon the north side lieth the city of the great king: God is well known in her palaces as a sure refuge.

Like as we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God,

God upholdeth the same for ever.

We wait for thy loving-kindness, O God,

In the midst of thy temple.

O God, according to thy Name, so is thy praise unto the world's end;

Thy right hand is full of righteousness.

Let the mount Zion rejoice, and the daughters of Judah be glad,

Because of thy judgments.

Walk about Zion, and go round about her;

And tell the towers thereof.

Mark well her bulwarks, consider her palaces,

That ye may tell them that come after.

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For this God is our God for ever and ever:

He shall be our guide unto death.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

¶ Here a Hymn may be sung. Then the Officiant, standing at the site of the Altar, shall say,

FORASMUCH as devout and faithful people have taken in hand to build on this ground, now marked with the symbol of Christ, a House to be dedicated to the glory of God, (*and in honour of _____,*) to be known as _____, wherein the Gospel shall be truly preached, the Sacraments duly administered, and the service of Prayer and Praise offered in this and coming generations;

¶ Then, taking the spade, and removing the first shovelful of earth, he shall continue,

THEREFORE I break ground for this Church; In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

¶ Minister and people.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us

OUR Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. Amen.

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O God, wonderful art thou in thy holy places;
Stablish the thing that thou hast wrought in us.
O be favourable and gracious unto Sion;
Build thou the walls of Jerusalem.
The Lord be with you.
And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

O LORD God of Israel, who didst move thy servant David to find out a place for thy temple, and dost have thy habitation among the sons of men: Vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to hallow this ground, upon which we propose to build a Church and to set up an Altar therein, that the work now begun may be brought to completion, to the honour and glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*¶ Here shall follow the Collect of the name of the Church. Then the
Officiant shall say,*

NOW set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God; arise therefore and build ye the sanctuary of the Lord God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built to the Name of the Lord; and may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you, and remain with you always. Amen.