

Rite 6: Renaming Ceremony

There are two tables. On one table is a candle and a cloth that will be used to cover the items to be surrendered. On the other table is another candle and items covered by another cloth that signify the gender or non-binary identity that is to be affirmed. Music is playing. The participant is dressed in gender neutral clothing but bearing symbols of their natal gender which can be put on the table.

Opening Scripture

God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. (Revelation 21)

Opening Statements

Friends, we come here today to mark a change of name. It is a recognition of a pre-existing truth that has been obscured, one in which we have all played our part in uncovering. Today we witness a sacred transformation in which the true purpose of PN's (natal name) life has been revealed.

What we do here has echoes in the Bible. God called barren Abram and Sari, struggling Jacob and the murderous Saul and transformed them into Abraham and Sarah whose descendants are more numerous than the stars, the patriarch Israel whose name became a nation and the Apostle Paul genius missionary of the Early Church. Both true nature and God's purpose was recognised in a change of name and recognition of the calling the new name symbolised. Today PN joins this honoured and holy tradition.

We come to watch God's sacred purpose fulfilled in calling PN to their true identity. From this time on they will be called N (changed name) as a male/female/nonbinary/gender queer (use appropriate term) servant of God.

Let us pray

Loving God, there are times when we need to mark that things have changed significantly in our lives. There are times when old ways of living need to be put to aside so that new and affirming ways of living, loving and being can be taken up.

Be with us as we celebrate the journey that PN has made and bless this faithful step they are making this day.

Bless each one of us that are here to witness this miracle of faith and transformation and keep us in love with each other now and in the future. Amen

Reading

There is a season for everything, a time for every occupation under heaven:

A time to give birth and a time to die;

a time to plant and a time to uproot what has been planted;

a time to kill and a time to heal;

a time to knock down, and a time to build up;

a time to weep and a time to laugh;

a time to mourn and a time to dance;

a time to throw stones away and a time to gather them in;

a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing;

a time for to seek and a time to lose;

*a time to keep and a time to discard;
a time to tear and a time to sew;
a time to keep silent and a time to speak;
a time to love and a time to hate;
a time for war and a time for peace.*
(Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8)

We hear in our reading that there is a God-appointed time for everything under heaven. We recognise that this is the time for you to put away the identity that feels like an ill-fitting garment and no longer serves God's purpose for you. We recognise that it is the time to cast the identity known as PN identity away. I will now ask you to affirm your intention to lay down this identity so that your calling to live as N can be realised.

PN do you wish to be known by another name?

I do.

Have you prayed and heard the whisper of the Spirit calling you to this transformation?

I have.

Have you prayed, struggled and discerned that this is the will of God?

I have.

Do you freely lay down the name PN but embrace all that has happened up until this moment in your life?

I do.

(to those assembled) And do you, family and friends recognise that it is time to lay this identity aside so that God's sacred purpose for this Child of God can be achieved?

We do.

At this stage PN places the symbols of gender on a table and a cloth is drawn over them. At this stage PN takes a light from the candle and extinguishes the flame. They then move to the other table and light the candle. The items are uncovered. The following questions are asked.

So what is the name that God has gifted you with in this new stage of your journey.

N.

And is it your calling to live as a woman/man/non-binary/gender-queer person? (Use which is applicable.)

It is.

Are you willing to accept yourself as a child of God in this stage of your life, seeking God's will for your life and acting with faith, love, mercy and kindness to all those you meet?

I am.

Then, we welcome you N among us. As tokens of this welcome, we gift you with symbols of your new calling (at this stage family friends come and present symbols of the new identity and gift them to N).

Song

(‘One more step along the world I go’ or ‘Morning has broken’ are suggestions.)

Blessing

N, go with the blessing of God the Creator

who dreamed of this day at the beginning of time

Of God, the Child who lived and laughed amongst us

And of God the Spirit who dances ahead of you lighting the way into new life.

Amen.