

THE ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF A TEACHING ELDER

Book of Government 13.1 – 13.6

Ordinarily, the ordaining/installing Presbytery will appoint an administrative commission to conduct a worship service at a date and time approved by the Presbytery. A sermon suitable to the occasion shall be preached. The person presiding shall recount the conditions necessary for ordination and/or installation, the solemnity of the event and its importance in the life of the Church.³⁴

SUGGESTED ORDER OF WORSHIP

It is appropriate for various members of the Administrative Commission to lead assigned parts of the service.

Call to Worship

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations. (Psalm 100:1-5 (NIV))

Hymn of Praise

Invocation

God of grace, You have given us minds to know you, hearts to love you, and voices to sing your praise. Fill us with your Spirit, that we may celebrate your glory and worship you in spirit and in truth through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

[The Lord's Prayer and/or Apostle's Creed may be added here]

Welcome and Introduction of Commission

Scripture Reading

Anthem, Special Music or Hymn

Announcements, Offering and Offertory

Sermon

³⁴ G.13-1A

Hymn

Explanation of the Office of Teaching Elder

The one presiding for the Commission may give appropriate introductory remarks recounting the conditions necessary for ordination and/or installation, the solemnity of the event and its importance in the life of the Church, and then proceed with an explanation of the office of Teaching Elder.

According to Scripture, those who hold the office of Teaching Elder should be sound in faith and have an aptitude for teaching. Their lives should reflect holiness and discipline that brings honor to Christ. Pastors are to preach and expound the Word, be God's prophet to the people, and the people's priest before God. Pastors lead the church in worship, celebrate the sacraments, and oversee the education, nurture, and mission of the church. As the law of love places certain responsibilities upon each Christian, the Pastor is especially bound to fulfill those responsibilities and to be an example to all.³⁵

The members of this congregation/Session³⁶ have elected you to serve as Pastor/Associate Pastor/Assistant Pastor, and you are now required to answer the prescribed questions.

Administration of the Ordination Vows

For a candidate being ordained and installed and for one coming into the Evangelical Presbyterian Church from some other tradition, the person presiding shall propose the following vows:³⁷

1. Do you reaffirm your faith in Jesus Christ as your own personal Lord and Savior?
2. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, totally trustworthy, fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, the supreme, final, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
3. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?
4. Do you promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with the system of doctrine as taught in the Scriptures and as contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church you will, on your own initiative, make known to your Presbytery the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?
5. Do you affirm and adopt the "Essentials of Our Faith" without exception?
6. Do you subscribe to the government and discipline of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church?

³⁵ Based on G.9-5A.2

³⁶ If ordaining/installing an Assistant Pastor, use "Session" (G.10-6A)

³⁷ G.13-2A, B

7. Do you promise subjection to your fellow Presbyters in the Lord?
8. Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy Ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote His glory in the gospel of His Son?
9. Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in promoting the truths of the gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?

For a candidate previously ordained in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, the person presiding shall propose the following vows:

Do you now reaffirm the vows you took upon your ordination and do you recommit yourself to them in the discharge of your obligations?

The person presiding shall administer the following installation vows for those being installed to office in an EPC congregation:

1. Will you seek to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties as a Christian and a Teaching Elder, whether personal, or interpersonal, private or public; and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the gospel in your manner of life, and to walk with exemplary piety before the congregation of which God is making you overseer?
2. Are you now willing to accept the call of this church as Pastor/Associate Pastor/Assistant Pastor, and, relying upon God for strength, promise to discharge to it the duties required of that office?

Questions to the congregation

When the candidate has responded affirmatively to the questions, the person officiating shall address the following questions to the congregation:³⁸

1. Are you, the members of this congregation, ready to receive _____ as your Pastor/Associate Pastor/Assistant Pastor?
2. Do you promise to submit to _____ in matters of spiritual discipline, and to receive with humility and love the word of truth?
3. Do you promise to support your Pastor/Associate Pastor/Assistant Pastor with your prayers, to give encouragement in _____ work, and to assist _____ in every way as _____ seeks to instruct you in the things of the Lord and to lead you in the building of the Kingdom of God in this place?
4. Do you recommit yourselves to fulfill the terms of the call you have extended and to make provision for your Pastor's needs that the name of Christ might be glorified?

³⁸ G.13-2C

The Act of Ordination/Installation

[When the congregation has responded affirmatively, the one being ordained/installed shall kneel and the members of the ordaining Court or Commission shall lay hands on Ordinand(s).³⁹ In the case of a Teaching Elder previously ordained in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, the laying on of hands may be omitted.]

God, our Father, we give you thanks for calling _____ to the office of Teaching Elder in this church. In obedience to your calling, we lay hands on _____ and ordain/install _____ to this office. We pray that You will fill _____ freshly with your Holy Spirit and enable _____ to faithfully serve You and the people to whom you have given him/her charge, through the name of The Good Shepherd, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Declaration of Ordination/Installation

Following prayer, the one being ordained/installed stands and the one presiding makes the following declaration:

By the authority of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the Presbytery of _____, I declare that _____ has been ordained to the Gospel ministry of this Church, and that _____ has been duly and properly installed as Pastor of this congregation, agreeable to the Word of God and the laws of this Church. As such _____ is entitled to be given support, encouragement, honor, and obedience in the Lord. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

All members of the Commission (and any other ruling and teaching elders present) may give the new Pastor an appropriate greeting.

Charge to the Pastor

Charge to the Congregation

Hymn

Appreciation and Dismissal of Search Committee

Benediction (usually by the one who was ordained/installed)

³⁹ G.13-3A