

Ordination and Installation

of Church Officers

Church Officer Training



Ordination

Ordination is the reception and confirmation of a person into a ministry of leadership in the church.

After a period of preparation and examination, the church publicly confirms that God has called a candidate to a special leadership ministry in a service of ordination.

The Hebrew word for ordination is ***semikha***, “the laying on of hands” (Numbers 27:23). In the Bible, Moses designates Joshua as the new leader of the children of Israel by placing his hands on him. Jewish tradition holds that this chain of transmission passed from Joshua to the 70 elders of Israel.

The ordination service includes prayers for the empowering grace of the Holy Spirit and the laying on of hands by ordained ministers, symbolizing the gift of the Spirit.

Ordination and Installation

What Happens in the Service

A service of ordination, installation, or commissioning focuses on Christ and the joy and responsibility of serving him through the mission and ministry of the church.

1. Following the sermon, the moderator (or designee) of the appropriate council briefly states the nature of the ministry to which persons are being ordained, installed, or commissioned.

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What Happens in the Service

2. Those who are being ordained, installed, or commissioned gather at the baptismal font. The moderator (or designee) asks them the constitutional questions.
3. A ruling elder asks the corresponding questions of the congregation. When all questions have been answered in the affirmative, those to be ordained will kneel, if able, for the laying on of hands and the prayer of ordination.

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What Happens in the Service

Because ordination only takes place once for each office, the laying on of hands is not repeated.)

4. Those previously ordained will stand, if able, along with the congregation, for the prayer of installation.

5. Signs and symbols of blessing may be conferred on the newly installed or commissioned person. After this, the moderator makes the declaration of ordination, installation, or commissioning.

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What Happens in the Service

6. Members of the session or presbytery welcome the newly ordained, installed, or commissioned person(s).
7. When ruling elders or deacons are ordained or installed, it is appropriate for one or more of them to give the charge to the congregation at the conclusion of the service.

Constitutional Questions

Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through him believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's Word to you?

Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?

Constitutional Questions

Will you fulfill your ministry in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by our confessions?

Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline?

Will you be a friend among your col-leagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?

Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world?

Constitutional Questions

Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church?

Will you pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?

(For ruling elder) Will you be a faithful ruling elder, watching over the people, providing for their worship, nurture, and service? Will you share in government and discipline, serving in councils of the church, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

(For deacon) Will you be a faithful deacon, teaching charity, urging concern, and directing the people's help to the friendless and those in need, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?