

## ORDER FOR THE ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

The ecclesiastical duties of elders and deacons are set forth in the *Book of Church Order (BCO)*, Chapter 1, Part I, Articles 1-6. These shall be made known to the congregation prior to election to office and these office holders shall acquaint themselves therewith.

The *BCO* (Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 15) directs that the names of elders- and deacons-elect shall be published in the church on three successive Sundays preceding their installation in order that the board of elders may consider legitimate objections.

Elders and deacons may be reelected, but shall not be reordained. When reelected the following order shall be used as an installation.

After the sermon and the prayer for blessing on the Word, as part of the Response to God, the presiding minister shall begin:

### PRESENTATION

Beloved in the Lord,  
we have come to ordain and install elders and deacons  
in Christ's holy church.  
Christ alone is the source of all Christian ministry,  
through the ages calling men and women to serve.

By the Holy Spirit all who believe and are baptized receive a ministry  
to witness to Jesus as Savior and Lord, and  
to love and serve those with whom they live and work.  
We are ambassadors for Christ,  
who reconciles and makes whole.  
We are the salt of the earth;  
we are the light of the world.

Following Christ's resurrection and ascension,  
God has given the church  
apostles, prophets, and teachers,  
deeds of power, gifts of healing,  
forms of assistance and leadership.

We stand within a tradition where God calls and empowers  
deacons, elders, and ministers of Word and sacrament.

The elder vice president of consistory invites the candidates forward, saying:

This congregation has elected the following people  
to the offices of deacon and elder:

*NN/s (using full names),*

to be ordained and installed to the Office of Deacon;

*NN/s* \_\_\_\_\_,

to be ordained and installed to the Office of Elder;

*NN/s* \_\_\_\_\_,

to be installed as deacon;

and *NN/s* \_\_\_\_\_,

to be installed as elder.

The candidates shall remain standing; the presiding minister continues:

Deacons and elders are called to serve as Christ served.

We look to them to be people of  
spiritual commitment, exemplary life,  
compassionate spirit, and sound judgment.

Deacons are set apart for a ministry of mercy, service, and outreach.

They gather gifts and offerings,  
care for them faithfully,  
and distribute them with wisdom and compassion  
to persons in need  
and for purposes that advance God's kingdom on earth.  
Deacons visit and comfort the distressed,  
provide for whatever necessities may arise, and  
assist the congregation at services of worship.

Elders are set apart  
for a ministry of watchful and responsible care  
for the welfare and order of the church.

They have oversight of all members,  
including one another, the deacons, and the ministers,  
equipping everyone to live in harmony with God's Word.  
They ensure the Word of God is rightly proclaimed and taught,  
and the sacraments faithfully administered.  
Elders assist the minister/s with their good counsel,  
and serve all Christians with advice, consolation, and encouragement.

Elders and deacons, together with the minister/s, form the consistory  
to lead God's people in proclaiming good news to the poor,  
righteousness to the nations, and peace among all.

The consistory provides for the welfare of the church, stewardship of property and finance, and the spiritual benefit and growth of all Christ's people.

As the three offices of deacon, elder, and minister of Word and sacrament, are united in Christ, so also in the church one office is not separate from the others. The minister of Word and sacrament does not serve without the elder and neither without the deacon. Together they enable the whole mission of the church. Everything in the church will be done decently and in order when faithful persons are called to office, and responsibly fulfil their charge.

**The presiding minister addresses the deacons- and elders-elect:**

*Brothers and sisters*, before almighty God, and in the presence of this congregation, answer sincerely these questions:

Do you confess together with us and the church throughout the ages your faith in one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

**Yes, truly, with all my heart.**

**The presiding minister shall invite the congregation to stand:**

Let us all stand with these brothers and sisters, confessing our faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

The congregation is seated; the candidates remain standing; the presiding minister addresses the candidates:

Do you believe in your heart that you are called by Christ's church, and therefore by God, to this office?

**Yes, truly, with all my heart.**

Do you believe the books of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and the perfect doctrine of salvation, rejecting all contrary beliefs?

**Yes, truly, with all my heart.**

Will you be diligent in your study of Holy Scripture and in your use of the means of grace?  
Will you pray for God's people and lead them by your own example in faithful service and holy living?

**I will, and I ask God to help me.**

Will you accept the church's order and governance, submitting to ecclesiastical discipline should you become delinquent in either life or doctrine?

**I will, and I ask God to help me.**

Will you be loyal to the witness and work of the Reformed Church in America, using all your abilities to further its Christian mission here and throughout the world?

**I will, and I ask God to help me.**

The presiding minister shall address the candidates for the Office of Deacon:

As deacons, will you faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully manifest Christ's love and care, gather and distribute the offerings of God's people, visit and comfort the distressed, minister to the poor and needy, and strive to advance God's reign of justice and peace?

**I will, and I ask God to help me.**

The presiding minister shall address the candidates for the Office of Elder:

As elders, will you faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully study God's Word, oversee the household of faith, encourage spiritual growth, maintain loving discipline, and provide for the proclamation of the gospel and the celebration of the sacraments?

**I will, and I ask God to help me.**

## ORDINATION

Those who are to be ordained shall kneel individually before the presiding minister for prayer with the laying on of hands. The great consistory may join in the laying on of hands during the prayer. When all have come forward and are in place, the presiding minister shall say:

Let us pray.  
God of grace,  
pour out your Holy Spirit,  
gentle as a dove, burning as fire,  
upon *N* (*using Christian name only*)  
and fill *her/him* with grace and power  
for this ministry of *deacon/elder*  
in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

When all ordinands have received prayer with the laying on of hands, the presiding minister continues:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only head of the church,  
I declare that *NNs* (*using full names*)  
are ordained to the Office of Deacon and  
*NNs* \_\_\_\_\_  
are ordained to the Office of Elder.

## INSTALLATION

Elders and deacons of the great consistory extend the right hand of fellowship to the new elders and deacons before returning to their places. All elders and deacons being installed face the congregation. The presiding minister addresses them:

Elders *N/s* (*using Christian names*),  
and deacons *N/s* \_\_\_\_\_,  
be faithful in performing your duties,  
magnify the One who has called you to these high and holy offices,  
be zealous for the church of Christ,  
hospitable, prudent, upright,  
devout, and self-controlled.  
Love goodness,  
holding always to the mystery of the faith.

The presiding minister addresses the congregation:

Members of *N* \_\_\_\_\_ Church,  
please rise to affirm your covenant  
with the elders and deacons  
whom God has given us.

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ,  
do you receive in the name of the Lord,  
these deacons and elders  
as duly elected and ordained servants of Christ?

**We do.**

Do you promise to respect them  
for the sake of the offices  
for which they have been chosen and ordained?

**We do.**

Do you promise to encourage and pray for them,  
to labor together in obedience to the gospel  
for the unity, purity, and peace of the church,  
the welfare of the whole world, and  
the honor of our Lord Jesus Christ?

**We do.**

Beloved people of God,  
receive these deacons and elders as Christ's own servants.  
Support them in love, that their work may bear fruit.

In the name and by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
I declare that these *brothers and sisters*  
are duly installed deacons and elders in this church.

**Thanks be to God.**

#### PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER

Almighty and ever loving God,  
you taught us to pray  
for ourselves and for others,  
and to give thanks for all of life.

May every grace of ministry rest on these elders and deacons,  
keep them strong and faithful,  
that your church may prosper in peace.  
Grant them wisdom, courage, discretion, and benevolence,  
that they may fulfil their charge  
to the glory of Jesus Christ.

Bestow your grace on this people  
that they may support these deacons and elders  
with prayer, cooperation, and encouragement,  
to guard them from growing weary in doing what is right.

Inspire your whole church  
with your Spirit of power, unity, and peace.  
Grant that all who trust you  
may live together in love.

Lead all nations in the way of justice.  
Direct those who govern;  
may they be fair, maintain order,  
support those in need, and defend the oppressed,  
that the world may know true peace.

Give grace to all who proclaim the gospel  
through Word and sacrament and deeds of mercy,  
that by teaching and example  
others may come to live for you.

Comfort and deliver, O Lord,  
all who are in trouble...  
sorrow...poverty...sickness...grief...  
Heal them in body, mind, spirit, or circumstance,  
working in them, by your grace,  
wonders beyond their dreams and hopes,  
through Jesus Christ our Savior,  
who taught us to pray:

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
now and forever. Amen.**

The congregation may exchange the Peace using the following greeting or through other appropriate words and actions.

The peace of Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

The service continues with the Offering, a Hymn, and the Benediction.