THE ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

The respective ecclesiastical duties and powers of elders and deacons are laid down in the Book of Church Order (Part 1, Article 1, Sec. 7 and 9). These shall be made known to the congregation prior to their election and these officers shall acquaint themselves therewith. Their civil powers vary under the laws of different states.

The BCO (Part 1, Article 2, Sec. 10) 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 lawful objections may be considered.

After an Approach to God, a proclamation of the Word of God, and the reception of the gifts and offerings of the people, the presiding minister shall begin:

PRAYER

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, who by your Holy Spirit guided the councils of the blessed Apostles and promised, through your Son Jesus Christ, to be with your Church to the end of the world, look upon us in mercy and direct us by your Holy Spirit that what we do at this time may result in the welfare of your kingdom, the building up of your people, and the glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

EXPOSITION

Brothers and sisters in Christ, you have chosen from among its members persons here present to serve as elders and deacons in this church. Their names have been published several times, and since there is no scriptural reason why they may not be installed into their offices, we shall now proceed in the name of the Lord.

Jesus Christ is the head of his church, which is made up of many members with a variety of gifts. The purpose of these gifts is that the whole church may confess that he is Lord and serve in his name. To enable all of us to do this, he gives particular gifts to some. To the pastor he gives gifts for the ministry of the Word and sacraments; to elders for the ministry of government and discipline; and to deacons for the ministry of compassion and material maintenance. As these ministries are united in Christ, so they are exercised jointly in the church.
Scripture teaches that those chosen to the office of elder are called along with pastors to encourage spiritual growth among the members and help them to walk in the way of Christ. Scripture also teaches that deacons are responsible for the ministry of compassion and material maintenance, representing God’s love and mercy in Christ.

By bringing together the offices of pastor, elder, and deacon, the consistory continues the full ministry of Christ in our day. Everything is done decently and in order in the church when faithful persons are chosen for and responsibly carry out these offices.

_The presiding minister may recognize by name those persons who have completed their terms of service as elders and deacons, thanking them on behalf of the congregation._

**PRESENTATION AND INTERROGATION**

_The presiding minister shall say:_

The congregation has elected __________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
___________ (full names)

to fill these offices. I now ask you to stand before us.

_When the candidates have done so, the presiding minister continues:_

That all may know your willingness to accept these responsibilities, I ask you to answer the following questions:

Do you reaffirm the vows you made when you confessed your faith in Christ and became a communicant member of his Church?

_I do._

Do you believe in your heart that you are called by God’s Church and therefore by God himself to your respective office?

_I do._

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 doctrines contrary thereto?
I do.

I ask you who have been elected elders, will you oversee and encourage the spiritual growth of the congregation; providing for the proclamation and hearing of God’s Word, the reverent celebration of sacraments, and the loving discipline of the members?

I will, with the help of God.

I ask you who have been elected deacons, will you manifest the love and care of Christ; gathering and distributing the offerings of his people, giving personal attention to the distressed, and exercising good stewardship over the goods and property of the congregation?

I will, with the help of God.

Will you, elders and deacons, be loyal to the witness and work of the Reformed Church in America and do your best to further her mission at home and abroad?

I will.

ORDINATION

If any have not previously been ordained to the office into which they are to be installed, they shall kneel before the presiding minister. All who have been ordained to the office may join the presiding minister in the laying on of hands. During the laying on of hands, the presiding minister shall say:

N_________ (use Christian names, omit surname), by the authority given to his Church by our Lord Jesus Christ, we ordain you elder deacon, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

PRAYER

The presiding minister shall offer the following prayer on behalf of all the candidates:

Let us pray.

Most merciful God, who called these persons to these high offices, enlighten them with your Spirit, strengthen them with your hand, and so govern them that their life and labor may be to the glory of your name and the advancement of your kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

INTERROGATION OF THE CONGREGATION

The presiding minister shall ask the elders- and deacons-elect to face the people and the members of the congregation to rise. When they have done so, the minister shall say:

Do you, the members of this congregation, receive these persons as elders and deacons in Christ’s church?

We do.

Will you respect them for the sake of the offices they bear, and promise to walk in the way of the Lord, faithfully heeding Jesus Christ and these servants who represent him?

We will.

The Lord bless you and multiply his grace to enable you to fulfill your promises.

Amen.

DECLARATION

The presiding minister shall ask the elders and deacons to turn about and address them.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, I declare that you are now ordained and duly installed in your respective offices, and commend you to the grace of God which will enable you to discharge all your duties. The Lord bless you and keep you: The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you: The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you and give you peace. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you always.

Amen.

EXHORTATION

The congregation and the new officers may be seated. The presiding minister shall address first the new officers and then the members of the congregation saying:
Elders and deacons, I call upon you to be faithful in performing your duties, to magnify the Lord and show zeal for his church, for which he shed his own blood.

Brothers and sisters, receive these persons as you would receive Christ. Support them in love, that their work may be productive, and together we may serve the Lord and experience his blessings. Let us pray for one another that each may obtain whatever grace we need to fulfill our duties.

*The following or a similar prayer may be offered at this point or incorporated in the General Prayers.*

Let us pray.

Almighty and merciful God, of whose help and guidance we always stand in need, bestow upon your servants such gifts as are necessary for them in their respective ministries. Give grace to them that they may serve you faithfully in this life and finally enter into the joy of the life to come.

Grant your grace also to your people whom they serve, so that all of us may fulfill our ministry, magnifying your name and increasing the kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ; in whose name we pray. Amen.

*Then may follow the GENERAL PRAYERS and the LORD’S PRAYER, unless it has been used already in the service. A HYMN of Thanksgiving may be sung. The service shall conclude with the BLESSING.*