The Constitution of the Reformed Church in America (Article 8, Sec. 19d) directs that the name of a candidate for ordination or installation shall be published on three successive Lord’s Days. In the case of a candidate who is not to be installed at the time in a particular congregation, but is to be ordained to the Ministry, such publication should be made in the congregation in which the ordination is to take place.

After the sermon and the Prayer for a Blessing on the Word, the service proceeds as follows.

Hymn

Prayer

Let us pray.

Almighty God, who hast given Jesus Christ thy Son to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body, and who by thy Word and Spirit hast numbered us among thy people, pour out upon us, we pray thee, the gift of thy Holy Spirit, that we, being cleansed from our sins, may be kept in faith and obedience to thy Word; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Or,

Almighty God, who, through the preaching of the Word, hast caused the light of the blessed Gospel to shine throughout the world, grant us, we pray thee, thy presence and favor in all that we do at this present time; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Exposition

Beloved Brethren, it is known to you that we have at three different times published the name of our brother, here present, to learn whether any person had anything to offer concerning his life or doctrine, why he might not be ordained to the ministry of the Word [and installed as pastor and teacher.
of this congregation], or, [and set apart as a missionary of the Cross]. Since nothing of Scriptural import has been alleged against him, we shall therefore in the name of the Lord proceed to invest him with this sacred office.

Holy Scripture teaches us that God, our heavenly Father, gathers to himself from among the lost children of men a Church to life eternal, and that in this work of grace he is pleased to use the ministry of men. The Lord Jesus provided, as St. Paul writes, that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.”

Ephesians 4:11, 12

It is evident from Scripture that the responsibility of the minister of God’s Word is threefold:

To proclaim the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; from the Word of the Lord to instruct, admonish, comfort, and reprove according to everyone’s need; and to refute with the holy Scriptures all schisms and heresies contrary to pure doctrine;

To call upon the name of the Lord on behalf of the whole congregation; to administer, according to the command of Christ to his Apostles and through them to all his ministers, the Sacraments which the Lord has instituted as seals of his grace; and to care for the flock of Christ;

To govern the Church of God in such manner as the Lord has ordained. Christ in speaking of Christian discipline said to his Apostles, “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

Matthew 16:19

The office of the Christian ministry is both glorious and necessary, and the Lord will have such an office always to remain; for he said when he sent forth his Apostles, “Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.”

Matthew 28:20

Interrogation

Here the candidate shall present himself before the presiding minister.

That it may appear to all here present that you, our brother, are willing to
accept this office as thus described, you are to answer sincerely these questions:

Do you feel in your heart that you are called of God’s Church, and therefore of God himself, to this holy ministry?

Do you believe the books of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and the perfect doctrine of salvation; and do you reject all doctrines contrary thereto?

Do you promise to discharge your office faithfully according to this doctrine and to adorn it with a godly life; also to submit yourself, in case you should become delinquent either in life or doctrine, to ecclesiastical admonition, according to the ordinance of our Church?

Do you promise to be loyal to the witness and work of the Reformed Church in America, using your utmost endeavor to further her mission at home and abroad?

Will you, with the help of God, strive to fulfill all the duties of a minister of Christ; preaching the Word of God in sincerity; administering the holy Sacraments in purity; maintaining proper discipline in the house of God; and shepherding the flock faithfully? What is your response?

The candidate shall then respond:

Yes, truly, with all my heart.

Ordination

The candidate shall then kneel and the presiding minister and other ministers who are present shall lay their hands on his head. Since ordination to the ministry is a prerogative of Classis, ordinarily only ministers of the ordaining Classis will take part in the laying on of hands. The presiding minister shall then say:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who calls men to this holy office, enlighten thy servant with thy Spirit; strengthen him with thy hand; and so govern him in thy ministry that he may decently and fruitfully walk therein, to the glory of thy name and the advancement of thy kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
The presiding minister shall then say:

Take thou, N__________ (here he shall name the candidate), authority to execute the office of minister of the Word; in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Declaration

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the authority which he has given to his Church, I now declare you to be duly ordained to the office of the holy ministry.

The candidate shall then stand.

Charge to the Minister

To be read by the presiding minister or some other minister designated by Classis.

Take heed, beloved brother and fellow servant in Christ, to yourself [and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit makes you overseer] (or if the ordination is to missionary service) [and to those among whom you shall labor]. Love Christ and feed his sheep. Be an example in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Attend to reading, to exhortation, to teaching.

Neglect not the gift that is in you. Meditate on these things; give yourself wholly to them. Take heed to the doctrine and continue steadfast therein. Bear patiently all sufferings as a good soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ; for in doing this you shall both save yourself and them that hear you. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that fades not away.

This charge is constitutionally sufficient. If, however, an additional word of exhortation to the minister is authorized by the Classis, it shall be said here.

If the service is one of ordination only, it is concluded with the following Prayer, General Prayers, the Lord’s Prayer, Hymn, and Benediction.

If the service is also one of installation, the Prayer shall be omitted and the presiding minister shall proceed to interrogate the congregation.
Prayer

Merciful Father, we thank thee that it has pleased thee to gather to thyself from among the lost children of men a Church to life eternal, and that in this work of grace thou dost use the ministry of men. We pray thee to qualify this thy servant more and more, by thy Holy Spirit, for the ministry to which thou hast chosen and called him. Enlighten his understanding to comprehend thy holy Word. Give him utterance that he may boldly make known thy Gospel. Endue him with wisdom and courage. Grant him patience to bear the difficulties and troubles in his ministry and mission that, being strengthened by thy Spirit, he may remain steadfast to the end and be received into the joy of his Lord; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

General Prayers

Hymn

Benediction

Interrogation of the Congregation

The presiding minister shall request the members of the congregation to stand and shall proceed to interrogate them as follows:

Beloved in the Lord, inasmuch as this most solemn procedure involves obligations and duties on your part toward him whom you have called to minister to you in holy things, I ask you before God and our Lord Jesus Christ:

Do you receive in the name of the Lord his servant, our brother, to be your minister?

Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his lips with meekness and love, and to submit to him in the due discharge of his holy office?

Do you promise to encourage and help him in his sacred work, and to labor with him in faith and prayer for the honor of Christ, the well-being of his Church, and the welfare of men?

Do you promise that, as long as he remains your minister, you will provide competent worldly maintenance and whatever else the honor of religion and his comfort among you require? What is your response?
The congregation shall then respond:

We do.

Charge to the Congregation

The members of the congregation being seated, the following is to be read by the presiding minister or some other minister designated by Classis.

Beloved in the Lord, receive this your minister in the Lord with gladness and hold such men in reputation. Remember that God himself speaks to you and appeals to you through him. Receive the Word which he, according to to Scripture, shall preach to you, not as the word of man but, as it is in truth, the Word of God. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief. If you do these things, it shall come to pass that the peace of God shall enter into your houses; and that you who receive this man in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward; and through his preaching, believing in Christ, shall through Christ inherit life eternal.

This charge is constitutionally sufficient. If, however, an additional word of exhortation is authorized by the Classis, it shall be said here.

Declaration

The presiding minister shall then say:

In the name and by the authority of the Classis of _______ I now declare that the pastoral relation between the Reverend _______ (using the full name) and the Church of ________ is fully constituted, that the Reverend ________ (using his full name) is the lawfully installed pastor and teacher of this church.

Since no man is of himself sufficient for these things, let us call upon God with prayer and thanksgiving.

Prayer for Grace

Let us pray.
Merciful Father, we thank thee that it has pleased thee to gather to thyself from among the lost children of men a Church to life eternal, and that in this work of grace thou dost use the ministry of men. We bless thee for graciously providing the church in this place with a faithful minister. We pray thee to qualify him daily more and more, by thy Holy Spirit, for the ministry to which thou hast chosen and called him. Enlighten his understanding to comprehend thy holy Word. Give him utterance that he may boldly and faithfully proclaim thy Gospel. Endue him with wisdom to govern aright the people over whom he is set and preserve them in Christian peace. Grant him patience to bear the difficulties and troubles which he may meet in his ministry that, being strengthened by thy Spirit, he may remain steadfast to the end and be received with all thy faithful servants into the joy of his Lord.

Give thy grace also to this people and congregation that they may bear themselves aright toward their minister; that they may acknowledge him to be sent of thee; that they may receive his word with all reverence and submit themselves to his exhortations; to the end that they may, by his word, believing in Christ, be made partakers of eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

General Prayers

*The General Prayers should be concluded with the Lord's Prayer if it has not been previously used in the Order.*

Hymn

Benediction