ORDER FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF A NEW CONGREGATION IN THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

The organization of a church is described in The Constitution of The Reformed Church in America (Articles 9 and 10) and shall follow the procedures therein stated. A meeting of the Classis shall be duly called and the president or other appointed officer shall preside.

Prior to the meeting, the Classis, acting as elders, shall examine the credentials of those presenting themselves. In the case of those who present certificates of membership in the Church of Jesus Christ, an examination to determine whether the certificates are in proper order is sufficient. In the case of both those baptized in infancy and those desiring baptism, who seek reception into full membership and admission to the Lord’s Table, the Classis shall examine the candidates as to their knowledge of the Christian Faith as contained in the Apostles’ Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord’s Prayer. They may also be examined regarding the sincerity of their decision to seek admission to the full communion of Christ’s Church.

Let both minister and elders remember, however, that only an affirmation of those things most surely believed among us are required by the Church from those who would enter her holy fellowship. Let them also remember that they are not judges, but fathers, whose chief duty it is to encourage and strengthen those who are young in faith.

After the Classis has assembled, with those to be organized, a service may then take place as follows:

Votum and Sentences

Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Lord’s Prayer

Scripture Lesson(s)

Appropriate lessons are Acts 2:34-47 and Matthew 16:16-28

Hymn

Sermon

Prayer for Blessing on the Word
Statement of Purpose

After the sermon and prayer, the presiding minister shall say:

Dearly Beloved, we are assembled together in the name of the Lord Jesus and under the authority of The Reformed Church in America to organize a new congregation. On the ____ day of ____________, _____, the Classis of ____________ approved the petition of several persons for a congregation in this place. Due notice having been given of the purpose of this meeting, I now call upon you as members of the Classis of ____________ to rise and give answer to the following question:

Here the members of the Classis or its appointed committee shall rise.

Do you, the members of the Classis of ____________, give your consent to the organization of a congregation in this place?

Answer: We do.

The minister shall then say:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the authority of the Classis of ____________, I declare that a congregation of The Reformed Church in America is now to be established in this place. I ask that the names of those who are to be received into the membership of this congregation be presented.

Presentation of Candidates

Here the missionary of the Classis or Synod, or an other appointed person, shall present the candidates for membership and say:

Fathers and Brethren, the following persons have declared their intention to become members of the Church of Jesus Christ which is about to be established in this place:

Those presenting certificates of prior church membership:

Their names shall be read.

Those previously baptized and making confession of their faith in Jesus
Christ, as Lord and Savior:

*Their names shall be read.*

And those seeking baptism and making confession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ:

*Their names shall be read.*

### The Reception

*The presiding minister then shall ask those presenting certificates to arise, and say to them:*

Dearly Beloved in the Lord, you have already made confession of the Christian Faith, and have been received into the communion of the Church. In the name of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, we now welcome you into our fellowship, and pledge to you our confidence and affection in the life and work of this household of faith.

May God enable us all to walk together in harmony and holiness, to help one another by word and example in the faithful performance of our duties toward God and our fellowmen, and to live in all things as it becomes the Gospel of Christ.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, to him be glory in the Church and in Jesus Christ to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

*The minister shall then ask both those baptized in infancy and those desiring baptism who seek reception into the full membership and admission to the Lord’s Table to arise, and he shall say:*

Dearly Beloved, you who now seek Christian Baptism [and you who have been baptized in infancy] have already before the elders made a confession of your faith and of your determination to live the Christian life. Now in this most solemn manner before God and his Church, you are to repeat and renew that confession. Let us all arise and confess our Faith, in the words of the Apostles’ Creed.

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and**
in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

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

While the candidate(s) remains standing, the minister shall ask him the following questions:

Do you acknowledge and confess the Apostolic Faith thus affirmed as your faith, and do you purpose steadfastly to continue to the end of your life in the truth affirmed in these Articles of the Christian Faith, as they are taught in the Church of Christ, according to the Word of God?

Do you acknowledge that you are delivered from all your sins and miseries only by the saving work of Jesus Christ, and will seek to show true gratitude to God for this deliverance?

Do you promise to make faithful use of the means of grace, especially the hearing of the Word and the use of the Sacraments; to give faithful adherence to the doctrines and teaching of the Church; and to walk in the spirit of Christian fellowship and brotherly love with the congregation, to submit yourself to all Christian admonition; to offer faithfully to the service of God your prayers and your gifts; and to seek the things that make for purity and peace in the Church of Jesus Christ as long as you live?

Answer: Yes, truly, with all my heart.

Administration of the Sacrament and Declaration

While the candidate(s) kneels, the minister shall baptize him, saying:

\[\text{N}_{\text{candidate's name}},\text{ I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.}\]

While all the candidates kneel, also those who have been baptized in infancy, the
minister shall lay his hand on each head in turn and make the following declaration:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only King and Head of his Church, I declare that N________, received into the visible membership of the Holy Catholic Church through baptism, is now admitted to the Lord’s Table.

The presiding minister shall then ask the members of Classis to arise to respond to the following questions:

Shall the confession of faith of these persons and the tokens of membership here presented be approved?

Answer: Yes.

Do you approve the application of these our fellow Christians to be organized as a congregation under the ___________ Classis of The Reformed Church in America?

What is your answer?

We Do.

Declaration

By the authority vested in me by The Constitution of The Reformed Church in America, I do now declare that the persons here present are duly organized as a congregation of Jesus Christ, and are taken under the care of ___________ Classis of The Reformed Church in America, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were no people but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy (I Peter 2:9, 10).

Prayer

Let us pray.
Almighty God, who in thy great mercy dost continually gather unto thyself from among the lost children of men a Church, and dost add to it daily those who are being saved, look with thy most gracious favor on these thy servants who have made the good confession before thee and thy Church. Grant to them the grace of thy good Spirit, that with all fidelity they may observe and keep their vows, walking together in the whole company of the faithful in thy Holy Catholic Church, of which our Lord Jesus Christ is the Head, and seeking ever to find that more excellent way which he has taught. Being members of his body and therefore members of one another, may they labor together with thee in love, not seeking their own welfare, but each esteeming his brother better than himself; and bearing the burdens of the weak, may they give a good account of themselves before thee and before the world. Keep them from all harm; deliver them from the wiles of the devil; bring them at last to the inheritance of the saints in light; and number them with thine elect of every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, a multitude which no man can number, who cease not to praise thee day or night; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who reigns with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, blessed forever. Amen.

Hymn

Benediction

After this service, a meeting of the new congregation shall be called under the supervision of the Classis; elders and deacons shall be elected, and other business conducted as necessary.