RECEPTION INTO THE CLASSIS AND INSTALLATION OF A MINISTER OF THE WORD

The Book of Church Order (Part I, Article 2, Section 2) directs that, after a call to a minister of the Word to the pastorate of a church has been approved by the classis and accepted by the minister, the name of the person so called “shall be published in the church on three successive Sundays, so that opportunity may be afforded for the raising of lawful objections.” There being none, the Book of Church Order further directs (Part II, Article 10, Sections 2 and 5) that the classis shall install the minister of the Word into his/her office.

This order is intended for use when a minister of the Word is to be installed as pastor and teacher of a congregation. Installation into other appropriate ministries should be conducted in accordance with the DIRECTORY FOR THE RECEPTION INTO THE CLASSIS AND INSTALLATION INTO A SPECIALIZED MINISTRY.

After the Approach to God and a proclamation of The Word of God in Scripture reading and sermon, the presiding officer of classis shall begin:

PRAYER

Let us pray.

O God, the great shepherd of the church, who through the light of your Holy Spirit has always guided your people: grant that we, by the same Spirit, may live for you, and together with all whom you call to serve within the body of Christ, may be faithful and obedient to your Word, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EXPOSITION

Beloved in the Lord, Holy Scripture teaches us that God our heavenly Father gathers to himself from among the lost children of this world a Church to life eternal, and that in this work of grace he is pleased to use our ministry. The Lord Jesus himself provides us with the grace we need to serve him, as affirmed by the Apostle Paul: “and his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.”

Ephesians 4:11-12
RECEPTION INTO THE CLASSIS

PRESENTATION AND INTERROGATION OF THE CANDIDATE

The presiding officer shall say:

Will the Reverend ____________________________ *(using full name)*
now rise and stand before the classis and this congregation.

When the candidate has done so, the presiding officer continues:

N ____________________________, *(use Christian name, omit surname)*, the Classis of
___________________ has approved the Call issued to you by the _________
Church of ________________ to be their pastor and teacher. You stand before us
now in order that you may be received into the membership of the classis and in-
stalled into the new ministry to which you have been called. So that it may be clear
to all here present that you are both willing and able to exercise the ministry of the
Word within the Church of Christ, I call upon you to reaffirm the vows made when
you were ordained a minister of the Word: Do you believe in your heart that you are
called by God’s church, and therefore by God, to be a minister of the Gospel of
Jesus Christ?

I do so believe.

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 so believe.

Will you proclaim the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; will you from
the Word of God instruct, admonish, comfort, and reprove, according to everyone’s
need; and uphold the witness of holy Scripture against all schisms and heresies?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

Will you call upon the name of the Lord for and with the whole congregation; ad-
minister the sacraments according to his command; share responsibility for the mu-
tual Christian growth of all members of the congregation; and exercise Christian
love and discipline?

I will, the Lord being my helper.
Will you be loyal to the witness and work of the Reformed Church in America, accepting its order and discipline, using all your abilities to further its Christian mission, here and throughout the world?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

Will you declare all these things publicly and make your commitment to a Christian ministry among us?

*The candidate shall respond by reading aloud the “Form of the Declaration for Ministers” after which he/she shall sign the book containing the declaration.*

**WELCOME**

*The presiding officer shall welcome the candidate using these words or some other suitable greeting after which he/she and such other officers or members of the classis as may have been appointed may extend the right hand of fellowship to the new member.*

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, we welcome you into our fellowship and pledge to you our confidence, support, and affection as you live and work among us as a fellow servant and minister of the Word of God.

**INSTALLATION**

**STATEMENT ON THE CONGREGATION’S MINISTRY**

*The new member and other members of classis may return to their places, after which the presiding officer or an elder from the calling congregation appointed by him/her may make a brief STATEMENT regarding the nature and/or heritage of the congregation so as to reveal something of the direction in which God may be calling it to go during the future, after which the presiding officer shall ask the candidate to stand before the body and inquire:* 

**ACCEPTANCE BY THE MINISTER**

In accepting the call issued by the ______________ Church of ______________, you have already acknowledged your willingness to serve God as their pastor and teacher. Do you now affirm publicly your acceptance of that office?

I do.
The candidate may make a further brief statement in his/her own words, facing and addressing both classis and congregation.

ACCEPTANCE BY THE CONGREGATION

The presiding officer shall call upon the congregation to rise.

Will all those within the fellowship of ____________________________ (name of the church) rise and make their affirmation of the minister whom God has given them?

*When the members of the congregation have risen, the presiding officer shall continue:*

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, do you receive in the name of the Lord, this his servant N____ (use Christian name, omit surname) to be your pastor and teacher?

In the Lord’s name we receive him her, and make this pledge: to receive with meekness and love the word of truth he she proclaims, and to submit with confidence and good cheer to the pastoral care he she provides in Christ’s service. We promise and pledge our encouragement and prayers, our participation and labor, as together we do the work of the Church. We promise that we will furnish him her such financial and personal care as will enable him her to do his her work joyfully and productively, as long as our pastoral relationship continues.

The Lord bless you and pour out his Spirit to strengthen you, that you may keep these vows in the name of Christ and to his glory. Amen.

*Brief, scriptural charges may be made to the minister-elect and the congregation. The presiding officer shall then declare:*

DECLARATION OF INSTALLATION

In the name and by the authority of the Classis of __________________________

I now declare that the pastoral relationship between the Reverend (using full name) and the __________________________ (name of the church) is fully constituted, and the Reverend ____________ (using full name) is the lawfully installed pastor and teacher of this church. Let us call upon the name of the Lord.

PRAYER FOR GRACE

Let us pray.
Most merciful God, we thank you for the service you call us to render within the Church of Christ and for the commission to proclaim the gospel to all the world. We ask you to continually strengthen [NAME] by your Holy Spirit for the ministry to which you have chosen and called him. Enlighten his understanding; endow him with wisdom and courage; speak to him that he may boldly make known the gospel. Grant him the grace to savor the joys of ministry in Christ’s name along with the patience to bear the difficulties and trials which may come, that being sustained by your Spirit, he may remain steadfast, always rejoicing in the words of the Lord, who promised his disciples, “I am with you always, to the close of the age.”

Give your grace also to this congregation, set apart for the ministry that becomes God’s people. Strengthen them as they work together in your Church; enlighten them through the proclamation of your Word so that they may be indeed what you called them to be through the Apostle Peter: “...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.” 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 after which the newly ordained and installed minister shall deliver the:

BENEDICTION