ORDER FOR RECEPTION INTO THE CLASSIS
AND INSTALLATION OF A MINISTER OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

The Book of Church Order (Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 3) directs that after a call to a minister of Word and sacrament 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 classis shall install the minister of Word and sacrament according to the order for installation. The classis shall appoint a time for the installation service and conduct the service with proper solemnity. A brief sermon suitable to the occasion shall be preached. The presiding officer of the classis shall begin following the proclamation of the Word.

PRESENTATION

Beloved in the Lord,
we have come to install a minister of Word and sacrament 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 his resurrection and ascension, Christ gave gifts to the church.
These gifts were that “some would 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.”

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

A representative of the congregation says:

*N________________________* Church of the Reformed Church in America, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has called *NN (using full name)* to be its pastor and teacher.

The presiding officer continues:

The Classis of *N___________________*, has approved the call to *NN____________________* to be pastor and teacher of this church.

We invite you to come forward, *N (using Christian name only)*, as a sign that you accept this call.

The candidate comes before the classis and congregation and stands facing the presiding officer. The presiding officer continues:

Ministers are called to build up Christ’s church.

They are to proclaim God’s Word, to declare forgiveness through Jesus Christ, to call publicly on the name of the Lord on behalf of the whole congregation, to celebrate Christ’s holy sacraments, baptizing and presiding at the Lord’s Supper.

They are to be pastors and teachers, sharing people’s joys and sorrows, encouraging the faithful, recalling those who fall away, helping the sick and the dying.

*N____________________*, you are here to be received into this classis and installed as pastor and teacher of this congregation. So all may know you are both willing and able
to accept this call to ministry in Christ’s church, the classis asks you to reaffirm the vows you made at your ordination as a minister of Word and sacrament:

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

Yes, truly, with all my heart.

The presiding officer shall invite the congregation to stand:

Let us all stand with N______________, confessing our Christian 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 candidate shall remain standing.

Do you believe in your heart that you are called by Christ’s church, and therefore by God, to this ministry of Word and sacrament?

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 proclaim the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; upholding the witness of Holy Scripture against all schisms and heresies?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

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.

Will you strive to fulfill faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully, all the duties of a minister of Christ: to preach the Word of God in sincerity, to administer the sacraments in purity, to maintain proper discipline in the household of God, and to shepherd the flock faithfully?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

If the minister being installed is already a member of the classis, proceed to the Installation.
RECEPTION INTO CLASSIS

N________________, will you publicly declare your commitment to Christian ministry among us?

The candidate shall respond by reading aloud the Form of the Declaration for Ministers. The congregation will stand for the reading and signing of the formulary.

In the name of our Lord, welcome to N________________ Classis.
We pledge our support, affection, and prayers while you live and work among us as a servant and minister of the Word of God.

The congregation may be seated while classis members and delegates extend the right hand of fellowship to the new member, then return to their places.

INSTALLATION

The person designated by the classis shall deliver the charge to the minister. The charge that follows shall be read. Additional brief counsel, if authorized by the classis, may be made before it.

Beloved servant in Christ, be attentive to yourself and to all the flock given to your care by the Holy Spirit. Love Christ: feed his lambs, tend his sheep. Be an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Attend to reading, prayer, study, preaching, and teaching. Do not neglect the gift that is in you. Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.

N________________, guard what has been entrusted to you. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away.
The presiding officer shall continue.

Will all the members of N______________ Church rise to affirm their covenant with the minister whom God has given them?

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, do you receive in the name of the Lord, this servant N_________________ to be your pastor and teacher?

We do.

Do you promise to receive with meekness and love the word of truth she/he proclaims?

We do.

Do you promise to honor her/his authority, welcome her/his pastoral care, and follow as she/he guides you in serving Jesus Christ, the only head of the church?

We do.

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

We do.

Do you promise her/him such financial and personal support that she/he shall serve among you with joy and not with grief as long as you covenant together?

We do.
Beloved people of God,
receive with joy your minister in the Lord.
Remember God speaks to you through her/him.
Receive the word she/he shall preach to you
as it is in truth, the Word of God.
Respect those who labor among you,
esteem them highly in love
because of their work.
Let those who preach the gospel of peace,
bringing good news and announcing salvation,
be beautiful and pleasant to you.

The presiding officer shall continue.

In the name and by the authority of the Classis of N_______,
I now declare that the pastoral relationship
between the Reverend NN_____________________
and N_________________ Church
is fully constituted, and that
the Reverend NN____________________
is a duly installed pastor and teacher of 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 N______________,
keep her/him strong and faithful,
may she/he herald the joy of your kingdom,
serving rather than being served.

Give your grace to this congregation:
strengthen them as they labor together,
preserve them in peace,
enlighten them through your Word.
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,
that 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 PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.
The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper should be celebrated; the newly installed minister shall preside. The communion elements may be presented at this time. The service will conclude with a Hymn of Thanksgiving after Communion, and the Benediction will be given by the newly installed minister.