

ORDER FOR A PROBATIONER'S LICENSING AND APPOINTMENT
--

Presbytery agrees to license and appoint a candidate to be a Probationer only after all the applicable paragraphs in the Manual of Faith and Order have been fulfilled.

The licensing and appointment take place in the congregation during a Sunday service.

The Presbytery commissions its Moderator (or his/her deputy), the Presbytery Clerk (or his/her deputy) the Probationer's Supervisor (normally the Minister of the congregation in which the Probationer is placed), at least one other Minister of Presbytery and at least two Presbytery Elders from outside the congregation to attend and to licence and appoint the Probationer on its behalf.

It is appropriate to print the Declaration of Standards in the intimation sheet, if one is distributed. If the congregation's language is not English, the approved translation of the Vow into its language should be said. The Vow should also be made available to the congregation to follow, either in print or by overhead projection.

The Presbytery Clerk places a copy of the Vow as printed in the Manual and a pen on the Holy Table.

The candidate takes his/her seat in the front pew before the service.

The local Minister or Interim Moderator conducts the service according to a standard Order of Worship on the Lord's Day in the Service Book.

In greeting the congregation he/she acknowledges and greets the Moderator and other delegates from Presbytery.

The local Minister or Interim Moderator preaches the sermon and includes in it a charge to the Probationer.

After the sermon the congregation says the Nicene Creed together.

The Order below then follows.

LICENSING

Statement of Intent

The congregation is seated,

The Presbytery Moderator takes his/her place behind the Holy Table.

The Probationer stands in front facing the Presbytery Moderator, who says:

We now proceed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ
and by authority of the Presbytery
to license and appoint brother/sister [full name]
as a Probationer for the holy ministry
and appoint him/her to serve in this congregation.
Listen then to the account of what preceded this service and what will follow.

Narrative

The Clerk reads the Narrative of Procedure:

Vow

The Moderator addresses the Probationer. Alternatively, if the Vow is in a language that the Moderator does not speak, he/she mandates the Supervisor (or, failing him/her, the local Minister or Interim Moderator) to address the Probationer.

I now ask you to answer the prescribed questions
in the face of the representatives of Presbytery here present
and of this congregation.

Do you, [full name], own and confess God as your Father,
Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord,
and the Holy Spirit as your Helper?

I do.

As far as you know your own heart, do you declare that
you are moved to enter probation for the holy ministry
by zeal for the glory of God,
love for the Lord Jesus Christ,
the call of the Holy Spirit,
the commission to proclaim the coming of God's kingdom on earth
and a desire for the salvation of all people?

I do.

Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments
as inspired by the Holy Spirit

to be the uniquely authoritative and sufficient witness to Jesus Christ
and as such the Word of God and the final rule of faith and life?
And do you accept as subordinate standards of the faith
the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds
and affirm the substance of the faith expressed in
the Confession of Faith of the UPCA
and the Declaration of Faith for the Church in Southern Africa
in the way that the Declaration of Standards sets out?

I do.

The Probationer then says:

I undertake to be faithful in the study of Scripture
and give myself to prayer,
to live a holy life,
to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour
to be diligent in pastoral care,
and to respect the confidentiality
of all personal confessions and confidences shared with me,
I will be subject to the laws and discipline
of the Uniting Presbyterian Church
and to the guidance of my Supervisor.
I recognize the responsibility also of the congregation
to help me discern whether God is calling me
to be ordained to the holy ministry.

The Moderator requests the Probationer to sign the copy of the Vow on the Holy Table.

The Moderator says:

The Lord help you faithfully to keep
all that you have promised before him.

Hymn to the Spirit

A hymn to the Holy Spirit may be sung.

Prayer for the Probationer

The congregation and the candidate remain standing.

The Moderator says (or invites the Supervisor to say):

Let us pray.
Let us each seek God's blessing upon this his servant in silent prayer.

After a suitable pause.

Hear the prayers of your people, O Lord, and bless your servant.
In your grace enable him/her to keep the promises
that he/she has made before you today.
Fill him/her with your Holy Spirit
and equip him/her with the gifts he/she needs
rightly to discern the unsearchable riches of Christ,
proclaim your gospel with power and
lead your people in prayer and worship,
so that they may grow in the knowledge and love of the Lord,
live to your glory in the world
and bear witness to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.
Sustain him/her in innocence and integrity,
so that he/she may be an example in word and deed.
Guide him/her also to discern your calling in his/her life,
and, if it is your will, grant that in due time
he/she may be called to the office of the holy ministry.
All this we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Licensing

The candidate stands, and the Moderator says to him/her:

In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by authority of this Presbytery
I now formally license you [full name] for the period of your probation
to preach the gospel of the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Only when it applies (see par. 17.37 of the Manual, as revised in 2011) the Moderator adds:

When your understanding of the doctrine and practice of the sacraments satisfies the Ministry Committee, the Presbytery may, as a special dispensation because no ordained Minister is easily available to do so, license you to administer the sacraments in this congregation under your Supervisor's direction and according to the approved Orders of service.

APPOINTMENT

Supervisor's and Congregation's Vows

The congregation is seated.

The Moderator invites the Supervisor forward and addresses him/her:

[Full name], do you undertake with God's help to guide and support [probationer's name] in his/her practical training during probation and help him/her in discerning whether God is calling him/her to the ordained ministry?

I do.

The Moderator then says::

I now address the members of the congregation of...:
Will you encourage [probationer's name],
and pray for his/her work in this congregation?
If so, please stand now.

Pause.

Will all others please stand.

Appointment

I duly appoint you [Probationer's name] to serve this community of God's people for the period of your probation.
I commend you in all this to the guidance and care of [name] whom Presbytery has appointed to supervise your work in the congregation and help you develop the gifts and skills you need for the holy ministry.
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Phil. 4:23

Prayers for the Probationer's Family and the Supervisor

The Moderator invites the Probationer's spouse and children, if any, to come forward to stand beside him/her and requests the Supervisor to stand behind him/her.

The Moderator then offers a brief prayer for the Probationer's family.

The Moderator then prays for the Supervisor:

O God, grant to [Supervisor's name] wisdom and insight in supervising [name]'s probation.
Help him/her to be humble in advising and constructive in criticizing.
And may he/she and [Probationer's name] together grow in fellowship, mutual caring and love.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Welcome and Right Hand of Fellowship

The Probationer's family remain at his/her side.

The congregation is seated.

The Moderator says:

[Name], we welcome you to your work in this congregation in our Presbytery and welcome you as well [spouse's and children's names].
In token of this I now invite the members of the Presbytery present and the Elders of this Congregation to give you the right hand of fellowship.
The rest of the congregation may sit.

The right hand of fellowship is given to the Probationer and his/her family.

The Moderator then says:

*[Name], I invite you to take your place as a member of this Presbytery.
The Probationer takes his/her place with the members of Presbytery present, while his/her family return to their pews.
The members of Presbytery all sit.*

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

*The Moderator invites the local Minister or Interim Moderator to conduct the rest of the service.
If Communion follows, the local Minister or Interim Moderator conducts it according to an approved Order in the Service Book.
Otherwise the Prayers of General Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer, the Notices and the General Intercession follow.*

Hymn

Commission and Benediction

*The congregation remains standing after the hymn.
The local Minister or Interim Moderator says:*

Jesus said: 'Peace be with you!
As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' Jn. 20:21
In the power of the Spirit, go into the world:
serve the Lord and witness to him.

We go in the name of Christ.

May the God who gives us peace make you completely his,
and keep your whole being, spirit, soul and body,
free from all fault at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Th. 5:23

*The Presbytery Clerk or the Session Clerk, carrying the Bible, leads out the members of Presbytery. The Probationer and, after him/her, (the Supervisor and) the local minister or Interim Moderator immediately precede the Moderator of the Presbytery, who walks last of all.
The Clerk reports the licensing and appointment to the next meeting of Presbytery and records it in the Presbytery's minutes.*