

ORDER FOR THE ORDINATION AND INDUCTION OF ELDERS

The Minister should work through the order with the candidates beforehand.

This Order should be used also in denominationally united congregations that retain the office of the ordained Elder but change the title 'Elder' to 'Church Councillor'. The terms 'Church Council', 'Church Council Secretary' and 'Church Councillor(s)' should then be substituted respectively for 'Session', 'Session Clerk' and 'Elder(s)' wherever these occur in the Order. The Declaration of Standards, the Vow and any other denominational wording then also need to be changed to accord with the united status of the congregation.

The Order for the Ordination and Induction of Elders takes place during public worship on the Lord's Day.

The Session is constituted before the service and may associate the candidates to be ordained and inducted with it. It then adjourns for the service.

At least two lessons from Scripture should be read. If they are not the lectionary lessons, they may be chosen from the following:

Ex. 18:13-26	Acts 14:1-7,19-23	Matt.9:35-10:1,5-15
Num. 11:16f.,24-30	Acts 20:17,28-36	Matt. 15:29-39
Num. 27:15-23	Rom. 12:1-8 or 18	Matt. 16:13-27
Isa. 6:1-9a	Rom. 15:1-7	Matt. 20:17-28
Isa. 42: 1-9	1 Cor. 1:18-31	Matt. 25:14-28
Ezk. 34:11-16	1 Cor. 3:5-15	Mk. 10:35-45
	1 Cor. 12:4-13,27-31	Lk. 5:1-11
	2 Cor. 6:3-11	Lk. 10:1-20
	Eph. 4.1-8,11-16	Lk. 12:35-40
	1 Thess 5:12-24	Lk. 24:36-49
	1 Tim. 3:1-7	Jn. 4:31-38
	2 Tim. 2:15-26	Jn. 10:1-6,10-18
	Titus 1:5-9	Jn. 13:1-17
	1 Pet. 5:1-11	Jn. 15:1-17
		Jn. 21:15-19

The sermon may be a charge to the Elders to be ordained and/or inducted and to the congregation. It should at least refer to the role or work of Elders.

After the sermon the congregation says the Nicene Creed together as its confession of faith.

The Offering is collected while a hymn to the Holy Spirit is sung. (Alternatively the Te Deum may be sung here.) During the hymn the incumbent Elders take their places as for Holy Communion. After the Offertory Prayer the Minister stands behind the Holy Table, facing the congregation. The candidates to be ordained and inducted take their places in front of, and facing, him/her.

Preamble

Brothers and sisters in the Lord,
 there are different spiritual gifts,
 but it is the same Spirit who gives them all.
 There are different ways of serving,
 but it is the same Lord who is served.
 There are different activities we do
 but it is the same God who works through them all.
 In each of us the Spirit is shown at work for our common good. *1 Cor. 12:4-7*
 We have gifts that differ according to what is given to us by grace. *Rom. 12:6*
 As members of the one body of Christ
 we are all called to exercise our gifts to build up that body
 for its mission in the world.
 One gift is the gift of leadership.
 If you are a leader, says the apostle Paul, lead with enthusiasm. *Rom. 12:8*
 Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honour. *1 Tim. 5:17*
 Those who are chosen to be Elders
 are leaders called to care for God's people
 and exercise oversight over them.

Narrative

The Session Clerk (or the Minister) reads the following narrative:

This is the story of how we have arrived at this service today.
 The Session of this congregation decided that it needed more Elders.
 It announced to the congregation how many and called for nominations.
 Session considered all the nominations,
 announced to the congregation all those it sustained
 and called for any objections to the doctrine or character of the nominees.
 It then announced to the congregation the nominations it approved,
 and the congregation duly elected the following members:
[full names, in alphabetical order].

Session has therefore appointed today
for their ordination as Elders in the Uniting Presbyterian Church in
Southern Africa
and their induction in this congregation.
We proceed to the ordination and induction now.

Declaration of Standards

Listen then to the Church's Declaration of its Standards.

The Session Clerk (or the Minister) reads the Declaration of Standards in the UPCSA:

[Text as in Appendix E above.]

Vow

Facing those to be ordained and those just to be inducted as Elders, the Minister says:

Beloved in the Lord,
do you accept your election to the office of Elder in this
congregation,
and do you promise to discharge all its duties faithfully?

Each replies separately:

I do.

For us to confer authority on you for this office,
the Church requires you, in response to its Declaration of Standards,
to take the prescribed Vow before God and this congregation.

The Minister hands a copy of the Vow to each candidate.

The candidates turn and face the congregation together.

Either separately or all together they read the Vow, audibly and at a deliberate pace.

**I, [full name], own and confess God as my Father,
Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord,
and the Holy Spirit as my Helper.**

**As far as I know my own heart,
I am moved to accept the office and ministry of an Elder
by zeal for the glory of God,
love for the Lord Jesus Christ,
the call of the Holy Spirit,
the commission to witness to the coming of God's kingdom on earth
and a desire for the salvation of all people.**

**I accept the Word of God in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments
as the final rule of faith and life.**

**I accept as subordinate standards of the faith
the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.**

**I accept the substance of the faith expressed in
the Confession of Faith
of the United Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa,
and in the Declaration of Faith for the Church in Southern Africa.**

**I acknowledge the doctrine and form of government
of the United Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa
to accord with Scripture.**

**I promise to be loyal to this Church,
to accept its authority,
to abide by its laws and discipline,
and to encourage other members to do the same.
I will serve as commissioned in its ruling councils
and seek its unity and peace.**

**With God's help I undertake to be regular in worship,
faithful in the study of Scripture and in prayer,
and holy in my own life,
so that I set an example to all.**

**I will share with diligence and compassion
in the spiritual oversight and discipline
that the Session exercises in the congregation
and serve the people entrusted to my care faithfully,
so that God may use me to build up the Body of Christ.**

**In all things I will seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ,
the good Shepherd who loves and cares for his flock.**

*Each candidate then signs a copy of the Vow on the Table.
After all have signed, they face the Minister again.*

May God accept your Vow
and grant you grace and power to keep it,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Alternatively, if any of the candidates are not able to read easily, they all face the Minister, who puts the Vow to them in the form of the following questions.

Each candidate then answers separately and audibly, as the Minister indicates by saying the forename of each after the first question and thereafter looking at each.

For us to confer authority on you for this office,
the Church requires you, in response to its Declaration of Standards,
to answer, before God and in the presence of this congregation,
the questions that it prescribes for Elders:

Do you 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 accept the office and ministry of an Elder
out of zeal for the glory of God,
love for the Lord Jesus Christ,
the call of the Holy Spirit,
the call to witness to the coming of God's kingdom on earth
and a desire for the salvation of all people?

I do.

Do you accept the Word of God
in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments
as the final rule of faith and life?

I do.

Do you accept as subordinate standards of the faith
the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds?
Do you accept the substance of the faith expressed
in the Confession of Faith of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in
Southern Africa,
and in the Declaration of Faith for the Church in Southern Africa?

I do.

Do you acknowledge the doctrine and form of government
of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa
to accord with Scripture?

I do.

Do you promise to be loyal to this Church,
to accept its authority,
to abide by its laws and discipline,
and to encourage other members to do the same?

I do.

Will you serve as commissioned in its ruling councils
and seek its unity and peace?

I will.

Will you be regular in worship and, with God's help,
be faithful in the study of Scripture and in prayer,
and holy in your own life,
so that you set an example to all?

I will.

Will you with diligence and compassion
share in the spiritual oversight and discipline
that the Session exercises in the congregation
and serve the people entrusted to your care faithfully,
so that God may use you to build up the Body of Christ?

I will.

Will you in all these things seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ,
the good Shepherd who loves and cares for his flock?

I will.

*Each candidate then signs a copy of the questions with the responses
on the Table.*

After all have signed, they face the Minister again.

May God accept your vows
and grant you grace and power to keep them
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Ordination Prayer

The congregation stands, and the candidates kneel.

Let us pray

Almighty God,
we thank you that with the blood of your own Son
you have purchased a Church for yourself
and equipped it with the gifts it needs to bear witness to your gospel.
As these *men and women* present themselves to you now
to serve you with their particular gifts,
help them to search their own hearts and minds
and acknowledge their unworthiness and need before you.

Pause for silent prayer.

Grant them true repentance
and the assurance of your forgiveness and mercy, we pray.

May your Holy Spirit give them strength and joy,
as they offer and dedicate themselves to serve you in this task.

After a suitably long pause the Minister says to the congregation:

To symbolize that Christ ordains through his Church
I invite you all to stretch out your hands toward the ordinand,
as we, as Minister and Elders, lay hands on them
and we pray the Ordination Prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ,
you call us to be faithful members of your Church
and carry out your ministry and mission to the world,
and to this end you give us your Holy Spirit
and equip us with the gifts of the Spirit.
So we commend these *men and women* to you.
As we now ordain them as Elders,
anoint *them* with your Spirit;
assure them of your call and commission
to govern, guide and minister in your Church;
and equip them with every gift they need for the task.
Deepen their knowledge of you and of your truth, we pray;
uphold them in your service;
and keep them faithful, diligent, just and upright.

Amen.

The Minister, assisted by representative members of Session, lays hands on each candidate in turn, saying:

[Forename], in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the King and Head of the Church,
and by virtue of the authority given to us
we ordain you an Elder in Christ's Church.

During the laying on of hands there may be a brief personal ministry to each candidate (by way of a verse from Scripture, a prayer or a word of encouragement).

When all have been ordained, they stand.

I now declare you to have been ordained to office as Elders
in the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa.

Induction

All the Elders now to be inducted stand in front of the Minister, who says:

I now ask you all:

Do you accept the office of Elder in *this* congregation,
and do you promise faithfully to discharge all the duties of an Elder in
it?

I do.

The Minister addresses the congregation.

Will everyone present please stand.

I now call upon all the enrolled members of this congregation of ...
Church:

please answer the four questions I will now put to you
by saying together 'We do,' if you can do so sincerely:

Do you dedicate yourselves anew to Christ
and the task of ministering to others that he lays upon us all?

We do.

Do you promise to honour these Elders whom you have elected
and to be subject to their oversight,
as they and the other Elders lead and govern the congregation
together?

We do.

Do you undertake to work with them in making this congregation
one that welcomes 'all peoples and nations of every language' *Dan. 7:14*
to be members of the Body of Christ with you?

We do.

Do you undertake to work with them in our congregation's mission to
the community?

We do.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, bless these your servants
whom you have called and your people have chosen.

Give them the vision to discern your purpose
for the Church and its work and witness in the world.

Set their hearts on fire with love for you
and for those committed to their care—
the love that rejoices with those who rejoice
and weeps with those who weep.

Rom. 12:15

So may they faithfully rule, lead and serve in your Church,
exercising their oversight not out of mere obligation
but willingly and eagerly, as you want—
not domineering over those in their keeping,
but being examples to the flock in all they say and do.

1 Pet. 5:2f.

Lord, strengthen us all and guide us by your Holy Spirit to serve and witness to this generation according to your will, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The congregation sits.

Declaration of Induction

The Minister addresses all the Elders to be inducted:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,
God's anointed holy Servant
crucified, risen and exalted on high,
I declare you all to be ordained Elders now inducted to this congregation.

Acts 4:27

May the God of peace
who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus,
the great shepherd of the sheep,
by the blood of the eternal covenant,
make you complete in everything good
so that you may do his will,
working among us that which is pleasing in his sight,
through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever and ever.

Amen.

Heb. 13:20f.

Presentation of the Elders

The newly inducted Elders stand facing the congregation, and the Minister says to the congregation:

Brothers and sisters, I present to you [names],
all now ordained and inducted as Elders in this congregation.

The Right Hand of Fellowship

The congregation sits, and the Elders stand.

In recognition of this we give you the right hand of fellowship.

The Minister and all the incumbent Elders give the right hand of fellowship to all the newly inducted Elders and return to their seats.

Presentation of Gifts

At the Session's discretion an appropriate gift such as a Christian book may be presented to each newly inducted Elder. *If (inscribed) ordination Bibles are presented, that is done with the following words:*

Take this Book.

Here is wisdom; this is the royal Law;
these are the lively oracles of God.

May it always remind you

that you have this day pledged your allegiance to its teaching and guidance.

The Minister then invites all the newly inducted Elders to take their places with the incumbent Elders.

Hymn

After the hymn the service proceeds with the celebration of Holy Communion or else concludes with the Commission and Benediction.

Commission

One of the following is said, followed by the versicle and response.

Jesus said:

'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.'

Matt. 28:18f.

Or

The Spirit of the Lord is upon you;

for he has anointed you to tell the gospel to the poor,

he has sent you to proclaim liberty to the captives

and recovery of sight to the blind,

to set free the oppressed,

to announce the time of the Lord's salvation.

Lk. 4:18f.

Or

Jesus said:

'By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit,

and so prove to be my disciples.'

Jn. 15:8

Or

Jesus said: 'You did not choose me, but I chose you,

to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.'

Jn. 15:16

In the power of the Spirit, go into the world:

serve the Lord and witness to him

We go in the name of Christ.

Benediction

The Lord bless you and watch over you;

the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you;

the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace.

Num. 6:24-26

Or

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 threefold Amen is sung.

After the service the Session is reconstituted. The Session then formally adds the names of the newly inducted Elders to the Roll of Session. The Session Clerk records this in the minutes.