

XIV. SERVICE OF PASTORAL INSTALLATION

This form may be used for an entire service of public worship or it may be adapted for use within the framework of another service. The Conference President or some other elder whom he may appoint shall be presiding minister.

The service may begin with a call to worship and the singing of a congregational hymn.

The Invocation

The presiding minister shall offer the following prayer:

Almighty God, look with favor now upon us who are assembled to worship You, one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity. We give You praise for all Your gifts so abundantly poured out upon us, and especially for Your holy Church, which is the company of all the faithful, the pillar and ground of the truth. Establish it everywhere in righteousness, advance all its godly interests, and defend it from false doctrine, division, and persecution. Supply it always with devout and diligent ministers to labor within its service; enlighten their minds, sanctify their hearts, and strengthen their purposes to do Your will. Grant that they shall declare the whole counsel of God, declaring both the demands of Your holy Law and the comforts of Your holy Gospel. May all whom You have called to perform this sacred office, and may all of us whom You have called to follow them, so serve You in constancy of faith and holiness of life that at the last we shall hear Our Lord Jesus say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." For it is in His name that we pray. Amen

The Scripture Lessons and Sermon

The presiding minister or someone else whom he may appoint shall read such readings from the Holy Scriptures that are appropriate to the occasion. It is fitting that a sermon now be preached setting forth the office, duties, and re-wards of the Christian ministry. Then shall a hymn be sung.

The Ritual of Installation

Then shall the presiding minister say:

Dearly Beloved in Christ Jesus, we are assembled here before God to install Reverend _____, as pastor of this congregation. He has been duly called to this holy office by your own invitation, by the authority of the annual conference, and as we believe, by the direction of God. May the Holy Spirit add His blessing and anointing to this sacred service.

The minister to be installed as pastor shall stand before the presiding minister, who shall say:

"Dear Brother in Christ, as you well know, the duties and responsibilities of your holy office are clearly set forth in the Word of God. As a minister and representative of Our Lord Jesus Christ, you are first of all to preach both the Law and the Gospel as they are set forth in the Holy Scriptures and as they are understood in the teachings of His Holy Church. This you are to do faithfully and without deviation from the truth, remembering the words of St. Peter the Apostle: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11).

All that is contrary to sound doctrine or to holiness of heart and life you must refute with kindness yet with faithfulness. Those who are committed to your pastoral care are to be diligently admonished to walk in the commandments of the Lord blamelessly, trusting always in the mercies of Our Lord Jesus Christ and depending upon the leadership of the Holy Spirit in all things. You are to offer grace to the penitent and broken-hearted, give warning to the erring and sinful, and extend direction to the troubled and confused. You are to bring the compassion of Our Lord Jesus, the Great Physician, to the sick and the hope of His mercy to the dying. Remember always that you stand before your people and serve among them in His name and on His behalf.

You are also faithfully to administer the holy sacraments to your people, baptizing all those who come to repentance and faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ, and celebrating with them the Holy Communion by which they are reminded of His atoning death.

You are to instruct the children and youth of this congregation in the doctrines and discipline of our most holy faith, counseling and leading them as a faithful shepherd into the maturity of Christian life and service.

You are to be an example in your own life and ministry of a faithful steward in the Church of God. Your life of prayer, devotion, and study of the Scriptures must be a pattern for those committed to your charge. Your holiness of life, your steadfast faith, and your integrity of purpose must always be without question. Your love of righteousness and your hatred of iniquity must be without question. So it was for Our Savior, Christ, and so it must be for you. "Be thou faithful unto death," He has said, "and I will give thee a crown of life."

Do you, Dear Brother, now solemnly promise before God and this congregation to diligently perform these duties?

ANSWER: This I do so solemnly promise, the Lord being my Helper.

The Charge to the Pastor Being Installed

Then shall the presiding minister say to pastor being installed:

"I charge thee now before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine... but watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

The Charge to the Congregation

The presiding minister shall ask the congregation to rise, and he shall say to them:

Now, my dear friends in Christ, you who comprise this congregation, I urge you to receive as your pastor, Reverend _____, whom you have called and whom God has established as His representative to you. Accept the Word of God that he shall faithfully preach to you, receive at his hands the holy sacraments that he shall celebrate to your comfort, and submit to the godly discipline that he shall exercise to lead you into all holiness of life.

See that your children and youth shall receive instruction in the Christian faith under his counsel, and bring them faithfully to the house of God where they shall sit under his ministry. Pray for him that the ministry he shall offer may tend to the salvation of many souls; and that as he faithfully performs his duties, directed and anointed by the Holy Spirit, you shall be saved from your sins, walk blamelessly in the commandments of Lord, and at last be brought to share in the glories of eternal life.

Honor and esteem your pastor who is to minister to your souls. Remember the words of Saint Paul, "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you. And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among your-selves" (2 Thess. 5:12-13).

Do you now accept these obligations to your pastor?

ANSWER: We will, the Lord being our Helper.

The Act of Installation

Then shall the presiding minister say:

Having received your promise and the pledge of this congregation, I install you, Rev. _____, as pastor of this church. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayer of Installation

The presiding minister shall then offer a prayer of his choosing or he may use the following:

Most Gracious Father, the giver of all good and perfect gifts, give grace, we now beseech You, to Your servant, to whom the charge of this congregation is now committed; and so replenish him with the truth of Your Word, and so endue him with purity of life, that he may faithfully serve before You, to the glory of Your great name and the welfare of Your holy Church. Grant to this pastoral family the blessings of Your sustaining grace and wisdom. Visit this congregation with Your love and favor; enlighten their minds more and more with the light of the everlasting Gospel; graft in their hearts a love of Your truth; advance them in holiness of heart and life, nourish them with all goodness; and of Your great mercy, keep them in the same, O Holy Spirit, whom with the Father and the Son together we worship and glorify as one God, forever and ever. Amen.

The Conclusion of the Service

The minister in charge may invite the congregation to come forward to greet the pastor and his family.