

Order for Ordination to Ministry

INTRODUCTION

In this order the people of God celebrate Christ's gift of ministry to the church. In planning the service, set the time so that people from other local churches within the association, representatives of other Christian communions, and guests from synagogues or other communities of faith may participate. Services of ordination held on Sunday mornings prohibit the enrichment afforded by this participation.

Representatives of the association committee on the ministry, in full consultation with the ordinand and the local church where the service will be held, plan the service of ordination. The conference may be represented in the planning. Lay and ordained people may share in the leadership of the service.

This order may be incorporated within a Service of Word and Sacrament or within a Service of the Word. The installation of the pastor may immediately follow the order for ordination. It is fitting that a sermon be preached concerning the ministry of all people of God and the particular ministry of those ordained in and on behalf of the church. The service may be enriched by the generous use of music. Plans should be made in consultation with the music leaders of the local church.

The ordinand may sit with the congregation until requested to come forward.

OUTLINE

This order may be incorporated into a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word following the sermon. An affirmation of faith and a hymn may precede the Order for Ordination to Ministry.

Greeting
Presentation
Exhortation
Examination
Acclamation
Laying on of Hands
Declaration

The Order for Installation of a Pastor may begin, following the instructions in that order. If installation does not follow immediately, a hymn may be sung and a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word continues, omitting the affirmation of faith.

Following the sermon, all who are able may stand and unite in an affirmation of faith and a hymn. After the hymn, all may be seated except the representative(s) of the association, the representative(s) of the local church, and the ordinand. The ordinand may remain in the congregation.

The greeting may be used at the opening of the service rather than at the opening of this order.

GREETING

The moderator or another representative of the association may greet the people, and they may respond in these or similar words.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Grace to you and peace from God,
who is and who was and who is to come,
and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness
and the sovereign of the rulers on earth.³**

The _____ Association
of the _____ Conference
of the United Church of Christ
greet you in the name of Jesus Christ,
the head of the church.

PEOPLE

To God, who by the power at work within us
is able to do far more abundantly
than all that we ask or think,
be glory in the church
and in Christ Jesus to all generations,
for ever and ever.
Amen.⁴

PRESENTATION

A representative of the local church that is requesting the ordination may address a representative of the association

in these or similar words. The ordinand's full name may be used in the first reference. Thereafter, the first name only may be used.

LOCAL CHURCH REPRESENTATIVE

addressing the association representative

_____ United Church of Christ,
local church
after carefully considering the call to ordained ministry
of _____,
full name of ordinand,
respectfully requests that the _____ Association
association
ordain _____ to the ministry
name
of the church of Jesus Christ,
consistent with scripture
and with the traditions of the church universal,
and according to the faith and order
of the United Church of Christ.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

addressing the congregation

The _____ Association has reviewed the request
association
of _____ United Church of Christ.
local church
We have prayerfully examined _____
name
concerning *her/his* fitness for ministry in Christ's church.
We are pleased,
on behalf of the United Church of Christ,
to authorize the ordination of _____
name
into the Christian ministry.

addressing the ordinand

_____,
name
servant of God,
we invite you to come forward
as a sign of your consent
to receive ordination into Christian ministry.

The ordinand may leave his or her place in the congregation and may stand, if able, at the chancel before the representative(s) of the association, who review(s) the United Church of Christ's Constitution and Bylaws regarding ordination.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

The United Church of Christ acknowledges as its sole head, Jesus Christ, Son of God and Savior. It acknowledges as kindred in Christ all who share in this confession.

It looks to the word of God in the scriptures, and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world.

It claims as its own the faith of the historic church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant reformers.

It affirms the responsibility of the church in each generation to make this faith its own in reality of worship, in honesty of thought and expression, and in purity of heart before God.

In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, it recognizes two sacraments: Baptism and . . . Holy Communion.

The United Church of Christ recognizes that God calls the whole church and every member to participate in and extend the ministry of Jesus Christ

by witnessing to the gospel in church and society. The United Church of Christ seeks to undergird the ministry of its members by nurturing faith, calling forth gifts, and equipping members for Christian service.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

Ordination is the rite whereby the United Church of Christ through an association, in cooperation with the person and a local church of the United Church of Christ, recognizes and authorizes that member whom God has called to ordained ministry, and sets that person apart by prayer and the laying on of hands. By this rite ordained ministerial standing is conferred and authorization given to perform the duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ.⁵

EXHORTATION

A representative of the association may then say these or similar words.

A

ASSOCIATION
REPRESENTATIVE

Hear these words from the prophet Isaiah:
I heard the voice of the Holy One saying,

B

ASSOCIATION
REPRESENTATIVE

Hear these words from the apostle Paul:
How are people to call upon one in whom

C

ASSOCIATION
REPRESENTATIVE

Hear these words from Jesus Christ to the first disciples:
Follow me, and I will make you

"Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me!"⁶

How wonderful it is to see a messenger coming across the mountains, bringing good news, the news of peace! The messenger announces victory and says to Zion, "Your God reigns."⁷

The Spirit of God is upon me, because the Holy One has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, heal the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and freedom to those who are bound.⁸

they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.⁹

fishers of humanity.¹⁰ Hear also these words of Jesus: You know that the rulers of the Gentiles dominate them, and their great leaders exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave.¹¹

EXAMINATION

A representative of the association may then ask the ordinand the following questions.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

_____,
name
before God and this congregation, we ask you: Are you persuaded that God has called you to be an ordained minister of the church of Jesus Christ, and are you ready with the help of God to enter this ministry and to serve faithfully in it?

ORDINAND

I am.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

Do you, with the church throughout the world, hear the word of God in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and do you accept the word of God as the rule of Christian faith and practice?

ORDINAND

I do.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

Do you promise to be diligent in your private prayers and in reading the scriptures, as well as in the public duties of your office?

ORDINAND

I do, relying on God's grace.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

Will you be zealous in maintaining both the truth of the gospel and the peace of the church, speaking the truth in love?

ORDINAND

I will, relying on God's grace.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

Will you be faithful in preaching and teaching the gospel,

**in administering the sacraments and rites of the church,
and in exercising pastoral care and leadership?**

ORDINAND

I will, relying on God's grace.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

Will you keep silent all confidences shared with you?

ORDINAND

I will, relying on God's grace.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Will you seek to regard all people
with equal love and concern
and undertake to minister impartially
to the needs of all?**

ORDINAND

I will, relying on God's grace.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Do you accept the faith and order
of the United Church of Christ;
and will you,
as an ordained minister in this communion,
ecumenically reach out toward all who are in Christ
and show Christian love
to people of other faiths
and people of no faith?**

ORDINAND

I do and I will, relying on God's grace.

ACCLAMATION

*Those official delegates of the association (clergy and others
so designated) who are able may stand.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

addressing the members of the association

**People of God,
you have heard the promises _____ has made.
What is your will?**

name

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

By the grace of God,

he/she is worthy!

Let us ordain *her/him*.

Come, Holy Spirit.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

Will you support _____ in the ministry of Christ?

name

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

We will.

*The people may show their approval and support by
applause, a hymn, or some other means.*

LAYING ON OF HANDS

*The ordinand may kneel, if able. A leader may invite those
who are to share in the laying on of hands to come for-
ward. The congregation may be given an opportunity to
participate in the ordination in a symbolic way. "Veni
Creator, Spiritus" or another hymn may be sung by the
choir alone or with the congregation.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**The laying on of hands is the symbolic act
whereby the church in every age
recognizes God's call to ministry
in the lives
of faithful women and men
and asks the Holy Spirit
to confer on them
gifts for ordained ministry.**

*Those who have come forward to lay on hands may now
do so. Silence may be observed. Then an association rep-
resentative may lead in prayer.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

Let us pray.

Eternal God,
 in wisdom you govern all things,
 and from the beginning
 you have chosen faithful people
 to serve you in ministry,
 calling some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists,
 some pastors and teachers,
 to equip all your people
 for the work of the ministry
 and for building up the body of Christ.¹²
 Now bless and sanctify by your Holy Spirit
 your servant _____,

name

whom we, in your name and in obedience to your will,
 by prayer and with the laying on of hands,
 ordain to the ministry of the church,
 committing to *him/her* the authority
 to preach your word,
 administer the sacraments,
 and exercise the responsibilities
 of pastor and teacher.

Bestow on _____

name

the power of your Holy Spirit,
 confirming what we do.

Let the same mind be in *her/him*
 that was also in Christ Jesus.

Enable *him/her* to nourish your people
 in the faith of the gospel.

Fill *her/his* speech with truth
 and *her/his* life with purity.

Increase the faith of _____ in you,

name

strengthen *him/her* in the day of trouble,
 prosper *his/her* words and works
 that your name may be glorified and your truth exalted;
 through Jesus Christ our Sovereign and Savior.

PEOPLE

Amen.

Thanks be to God!

 DECLARATION

The newly ordained minister may rise.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

In the name of Jesus Christ,
 the head of the church,
 and by the authority of the _____ Association

association

of the _____ Conference

conference

of the United Church of Christ,
 I declare you to be ordained
 into the ministry of Jesus Christ.

*A Bible may be presented to the newly ordained minister
 with these or other words.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

Receive at our hands this Bible
 of which you are appointed as an interpreter.
 Be diligent in the study of its message
 that you may speak with the authority of truth,
 and be a faithful minister of the word and sacraments.

*A certificate of ordination may be presented, and a gesture
 of Christian love may be made with these or other words.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

You are granted ordained ministerial standing
 in the United Church of Christ;
 and in behalf of its people,
 we offer you the hand of Christian love.

The leaders may greet the newly ordained minister.

*If the newly ordained minister is to be installed within this
 service, the Order for Installation of a Pastor follows the
 Order for Ordination to Ministry. See the introduction to
 that order, beginning on page 412, for instructions.*

*If installation does not immediately follow, a hymn may be
 sung. A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the
 Word continues. It is appropriate that the newly ordained
 minister serve communion and give the benediction.*