

An Order of Service for the Ordination and Induction of Elders

The following liturgy is based on the Church of Scotland's Book of Common Order (1994) and Appendices H-5 and H-9 of the PCANZ's old Book of Order.

The ordination and induction takes place during a public service of worship, at an appropriate point, preferably after the sermon.

Congregational responses are in bold type and italics.

Prologue (based on 1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

There are many gifts,

but it is the same Spirit who give them.

There are different ways of serving God,

but it is the same Lord who is served.

God works through different people in different ways,

but it is the same God whose purposes are achieved through them all.

Each one is given a gift by the Spirit,

to use it for the common good.

We have the joy of using our gifts as members of the Church of Christ, which is his body continuing his ministry in the world today.

Those who are chosen for the office of eldership are asked to seek the fruit of God's Word in people's lives, to care for God's people and encourage them in the Faith, and to exercise spiritual oversight and leadership within the congregation.

A brief narrative of the process followed for the election of new elders shall be given by the minister/Moderator or the session/church council clerk.

Preamble

In the name of the risen and ascended Lord, who gives gifts for building up the body of Christ and sharing in God's mission, we are gathered ...

either

to ordain A,B,C, and D
to the office of eldership
and to induct them as elders in this congregation.

or

to ordain A,B,C, and D

to the office of eldership
and to induct them,
together with E,F,G, and H
as elders in this congregation.

or

to induct E,F,G, and H
as elders in this congregation.

In this act,
the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand,
as part of the holy catholic or universal Church,
worshipping one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
affirms anew its belief in the Gospel of Jesus Christ,
and, through the power of the Holy Spirit,
commits itself afresh to sharing in his life and mission.

We acknowledge the Word of God,
which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments,
to be the supreme rule of faith and life.

We hold as our subordinate standards the Westminster Confession of Faith,
the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and Kupu Whakapono.

We recognise liberty of opinion on such points of doctrine
as do not enter into the substance of the Reformed Faith,
and claim the right,
in dependence on the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit,
to formulate, interpret, or modify our subordinate standards;
always in agreement with the Word of God
and the fundamental doctrines of the Reformed Faith
contained in the subordinate standards,
of which agreement the Church itself shall be sole judge.

Affirmation

The Moderator/minister says to the elders-elect:

In view of this Declaration, you are now required to answer these questions:

Do you undertake, with God's help,
the office and ministry of elder,
encouraging people in the Faith,
exercising spiritual oversight, leadership and discernment,
and remaining diligent in prayer and service.

I do.

Do you believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith

contained in the standards of this Church;
do you promise to seek the unity and peace of this Church,
to uphold the doctrine, worship, government, and discipline thereof,
and to take your due part in the administration of its affairs?

I do.

The Lord bless you and enable you to keep your promises.

Signing the Formula

The elders-elect may sign the Formula here or at the conclusion of the service. The Formula reads as follows:

I believe in the Word of God in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and the fundamental doctrines of Christian Faith contained in the Kupu Whakapono and Commentary, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and other subordinate standards of this Church. I accept that liberty of conviction is recognised in this Church but only on such points as do not enter into the fundamental doctrines of Christian faith contained in the Scriptures and subordinate standards. I acknowledge the Presbyterian government of this Church to be agreeable to the Word of God and promise to submit to it. I promise to observe the order and administration of public worship as allowed in this Church.

Prayer

The elders-elect may kneel or stand. Other elders may be invited to gather round. The minister/Moderator prays:

Loving God,
we give you thanks that by your grace you have called
A,B, ... G, and H (or these your servants whom we have named before you)
to lead and care for your people as elders in your Church.
We commend them to you now
as we (ordain and) induct them into the office of eldership.
Grant them the gift of your Holy Spirit
that their hearts may be set on fire with love for you
and for those committed to their care.
Make them pure in heart
as those who have the mind of Christ.
Give them vision to discern your purpose
for the Church and for the world you love.
Keep them faithful to the end in all their service,
that when the chief shepherd appears,
they may receive glory, a crown that never fades.

These things we ask in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Declaration and Welcome

The minister/Moderator says:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the King and the Head of the Church,

(I declare you to have been ordained to the office of the eldership, and)

I induct you as elders in this congregation.

As a sign of our welcome we give you the right hand of fellowship.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

The elders follow the minister/Moderator in offering the right hand of fellowship.

Renewal of Commitment

The minister/Moderator says:

Christ calls us all to share in his ministry.

Let us, then, dedicate ourselves anew to his service.

Please stand.

To all:

Members and elders of this congregation:

putting your whole trust in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord,

do you commit yourselves to love and serve his Church and Kingdom?

We do.

To the congregation:

As members of this congregation,
will you encourage and support your elders,
and remember them in your prayers?

We will.

To the elders:

In your service as elders,
will you seek to be a worthy example
"in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity"
to the people you serve,
God being your helper?

We will.

Prayer

Together:

God of grace,

***you have called us to be servants of Christ Jesus,
and to share in his eternal ministry of love and reconciliation.***

***Renew our enthusiasm; give us joy in your service,
that we may declare your wonderful deeds
and show your love to the world;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.***

The service continues in the customary manner.