**Ruling Elders**

**A Service of Ordination**

*The ordination of elders is to be included in a public service of worship.*

*It is appropriate for the session to meet briefly with elders-elect before a service of ordination to offer prayer with them and to enter the church with them. They may sit in their usual places until it is time for the ordination to occur.*

*The ordination normally follows the sermon. The people of the congregation shall stand, and the presiding minister shall lead them, saying:*

There are varieties of gifts,

**but the same Spirit**;

There are varieties of services,

**but the same Lord;**

There are varieties of activities,

**but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone**.

To each one is given a gift by the Spirit,

**to use it for the common good.**

Together we are the body of Christ,

**and individually members of it.**

*I Cor. 12: 4-7, 27, adapted.*

Though we have different gifts,

together we are called to be the church

with a ministry in the world

which is led by the risen Christ.

**A Creed**

Let us confess our faith together in the words of The Apostles' Creed:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,**

**creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,**

**born of the Virgin Mary,**

**suffered under Pontius Pilate,**

**was crucified, died, and was buried;**

**he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;**

**he ascended into heaven,**

**he is seated at the right hand of the Father,**

**and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

**the holy catholic Church,**

**the communion of saints,**

**the forgiveness of sins,**

**the resurrection of the body,**

**and the life everlasting. Amen.**

*The congregation shall be seated.*

**Narration Of Steps**

The clerk of session, after narrating briefly the events that have led up to this election and ordination, shall invite the elders-elect to come forward and stand before the moderator. The elders of session will form a second semi-circle behind them. The clerk will present the elders-elect to the moderator, saying:

Moderator, on behalf of the Session and the people of this congregation, I present to you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and request that you now proceed to ordain them as elders and admit them to the Session.

*The moderator shall say:*

Listen to what The Presbyterian Church in Canada believes concerning the ministry of ruling elders.

**Preamble**

Approved, 1971 Revised, 1992, 1998.

All ministries of the Church proceed from and are sustained by the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our Prophet, Priest and King, the Minister of the covenant of grace. By the operation of God's Word and Spirit, the Church is gathered, equipped, and sent out to participate in this ministry. All members of the Church are called to share the Gospel with the world, and to offer to the Father the worship and service that are due to the Creator from the creation, through Christ, the only Mediator, until he comes again. That the Church may be continually renewed and nurtured for ministry, Christ furnishes the Church with pastors and teachers. He requires and enables the Church to discern and to confirm by ordination those whom he calls to this pastoral and teaching office. The standards of his Church he entrusts in a special degree of responsibility to their care.

*The Form of Presbyterial Church Government* of the

Westminster Assembly reminds us that Christ has furnished

some in the Church, beside the Ministers of the Word, with gifts for government and with commission to execute the same, when called thereunto, who are to join with the Minister in the government of the church, which officers reformed churches commonly call Elders.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada is bound only to Jesus Christ, the Church’s King and Head. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as the written Word of God, testifying to Christ the living Word, are the canon of all doctrine, by which Christ rules our faith and life. We acknowledge our historic continuity with the Holy Catholic Church and our doctrinal heritage in the ecumenical creeds, and the confessions of the Reformation. Our subordinate standards are the Westminster Confession of Faith as adopted in 1875 and 1889, the Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation of 1954, Living Faith (Foi Vivant) as adopted in 1998, and such doctrine as the Church, in obedience to Scripture and under the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, may yet confess in the Church’s continuing function of reformulating the faith.

(Here shall follow in the Service of Ordination a statement of duties of the elder.)

**The Vows**

*The moderator shall address the elders-elect, saying:*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, that your faith in God and your integrity of purpose may be declared before God and all people, you are required in terms of this preamble to answer the questions appointed for all who would enter the office of the Ruling Elder.

1. Do you believe in God the Father, made known in his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom the Holy Spirit witnesses in the witnesses in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments?

**I do.**

1. Do you accept the subordinate standards of this Church, promising to uphold its doctrine under the continual illumination and correction of the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures and to be guided thereby in fostering Christian belief, worship and service among the people?

**I do.**

3. Do you accept the government of this Church by sessions, presbyteries, synods, and general assemblies, and do you promise to share in and submit yourself to all lawful oversight therein, and to follow no divisive course, but to seek the peace and unity of Christ among your people and throughout the Holy Catholic Church?

**I do.**

4. In accepting the office of Elder, do you promise to perform your duties in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, striving to build up his Church and to strengthen its mission in the world?

**I do.**

May the Lord bless you and give you grace to keep these vows.

*The congregation shall stand, and the minister shall say:*

The ordination of elders in a congregation, if their leadership and ministry are to be fruitful, involves responsibilities for both the elders and the people of the church. These questions therefore I direct to you, the members and adherents of this congregation, so that you may renew your obligations to this shared ministry.

1. Do you confess your faith in God as creator and ruler of the world, in Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord, and in the Holy Spirit as your inspiration and strength?

**We do.**

2. Do you receive \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as elders, chosen by God through the voice of this congregation to lead you in the way of Christ?

**We do.**

3. Do you agree to encourage them, to respect their decisions as they guide you, serving Jesus Christ, who alone is head of the church?

**We do.**

May the Lord bless you and give you grace to keep these promises. **Amen.**

**Ordination Prayer**

*The elders-elect kneel and the moderator leads in prayer, saying:*

We praise and glorify you, Lord God Almighty,

for you have created us and called us to yourself;

you have redeemed us in Jesus Christ your Son;

you sustain our lives and our works

through the presence and power of your Holy Spirit.

Almighty God:

in every age you have chosen servants

to speak your word and lead your people.

We thank you for these people you have called to serve you as ruling elders.

By the power of your Spirit,

develop in them the gifts of ministry;

may they have the same mind that was in Christ,

serving you in the world as long as they shall live;

through Jesus Christ the Lord.  **Amen**.

*The minister places a hand on the head of each in turn, calling each by his or her Christian name.*

*The congregation shall say the following prayer, in unison:*

**God of Grace, who baptized us into a common ministry as ambassadors of Christ;**

**who called us to be a priesthood of all believers;**

**who entrusted to us the message of reconciliation;**

**we pray for courage and discipline to follow where your elders rightly lead us, that together we may declare your mighty acts and show your love to the world; through Jesus Christ who is ruler of all. Amen.**

**Declaration**

*The newly ordained elders stand. The minister says:*

In the name of Jesus Christ, the only king and head of the church, and by the authority invested in me by the Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I now declare you to have been ordained as a ruling elder and admit you to the session of this congregation. Whatever you do, in word or action, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God through him. **Amen.**

**The Right Hand Of Fellowship**

*The minister and other members of the session shall give the newly ordained elders the right hand of fellowship.*

*All may be seated, and the service of worship shall continue.*