



Ordination to the Ministry of Word and Service

Because all of its baptized members share in Christ's ministry of love and service, the church equips and supports them for their ministries in the world. Within this context of ministry, the church calls some of its baptized members for specific ministries.

The ministry of word and service has New Testament roots in the ministry of diakonia: Stephen, Philip, and five others oversee the distribution of food within the church in Jerusalem; Phoebe and Priscilla are identified with diakonia in Paul's letters. Although this ministry has taken different forms throughout the church's history, its emphasis has been this: Those called to the ministry of word and service speak God's word to God's world, and in turn they speak also for the needs of God's world to the church; they give leadership in the church's mission to witness to God's love through both words and actions. In the service of Ordination to the Ministry of Word and Service, the church entrusts this ministry to those who have accepted the church's call and sends them into this ministry.

Ordination to the Ministry of Word and Service is properly set within the service of Holy Communion, following the sermon and the hymn of the day. The Nicene Creed or the Apostles' Creed may precede the ordination rite.

The bishop of the synod in which candidate/s have accepted calls normally presides at the ordination of the candidate/s.

Presentation

The assembly stands. Candidate/s for ordination gather with presenter/s and participating ministers before the assembly. Each candidate is presented to the presiding minister and to the assembly.

I present for ordination to the ministry of word and service full name, who has been prepared, examined, and approved for this ministry and who has been called by the church to this ministry through name of calling body.

Thanks be to God.

The presenter/s move aside, and the assembly is seated.

Address and Questions

The presiding minister addresses the candidate/s.

All baptized Christians are called to share in Christ's ministry of love and service in the world, to the glory of God and for the sake of the human family and the whole creation. You have been called as *minister/s* of word and service to give leadership in the church's mission to proclaim the gospel through word and deed. You are now to be entrusted with the ministry of word and service in the one holy catholic church by the laying on of hands and by prayer.

A reading from Luke: Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (*Luke 4:18-19*)

A reading from First Corinthians: There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (*1 Corinthians 12:4-7*)

A reading from Second Corinthians: The love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! (*2 Corinthians 5:14-17*)

The presiding minister addresses questions to the candidate/s.

Before almighty God, to whom you must give account,
and in the presence of this assembly, I ask:

Will you accept this ministry,
believing that the church's call is God's call
to the ministry of word and service?

Each candidate responds: I will, and I ask God to help me.

The church in which you are to be ordained
confesses that the holy scriptures are the word of God
and are the norm of its faith and life.

We accept, teach, and confess
the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds.
We also acknowledge the Lutheran confessions
as true witnesses and faithful expositions of the holy scriptures.

Will you therefore carry out your ministry in accordance with the holy scriptures
and these creeds and confessions?

Each candidate responds: I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you be diligent in your study of the holy scriptures
and faithful in your use of the means of grace?
Will you pray for God's people,
encourage and support them as they worship and grow in faith,
and lead them by your own example in faithful service and holy living?

Each candidate responds: I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you give faithful witness in the world through word and deed,
that God's love may be known in all that you do?

Each candidate responds: I will, and I ask God to help me.

Almighty God, who has given you the will to do these things,
graciously give you the strength and compassion to perform them.

The assembly responds: Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

The assembly stands for the prayers of intercession.

The prayers are prepared locally for the occasion. The following prayers may serve as a model.

An assisting minister invites the assembly into prayer with these or similar words.

With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus,
let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

For the holy catholic church,

that, filled with your love,
it may hunger for truth and thirst after righteousness:
God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

For all members of the church,
that they may serve you in true and godly lives:
God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

For *name/s*, called to the ministry of word and service in the church,
that, sustained by your Holy Spirit,
they may carry out this ministry with joy and a spirit of bold trust,
serve your people and the world in need, and glorify your name:
God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

For all ministers of word and service;
for all ministers of word and sacrament;
for *name/s*, our *bishop/s*;
that, together with all those responsible for the care and nurture of your people,
they may support one another in serving Christ:
God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

For the peace of the church,
that our divisions may be overcome,
so that, united in Christ, we may serve the world
and bear witness to the good news:
God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

For the mission of the church,
that in faithful witness it may proclaim the gospel
and in humble love serve all in need:
God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

For the nations of the world and their leaders,
that they may work for justice
and promote the dignity and freedom of every person:
God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

For the whole creation,
that everything you have made may fulfill your purpose

and that we may exercise care for your diverse gifts:
God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

For the poor, the persecuted, the sick, the lonely, the forgotten, and all who suffer;
for refugees, prisoners, and all who are in danger;
that they may be relieved and protected:
God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

Other intercessions may be included.

For the glorious company of all the saints,
those who have died in faith and those who live in certain hope, we praise you.
That their witness may give us courage until the day of Jesus Christ:
God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

The presiding minister concludes the prayers with these or similar words.
Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray,
trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen.

Hymn of Invocation

The candidate/s may kneel. "Creator Spirit, heavenly dove," hymn 577 or 578, or another appropriate hymn of invocation is sung.

Thanksgiving

The presiding minister leads the assembly in giving thanks.
The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
we thank you for sending your Son,
Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh,
who proclaimed your gracious reign
in words and in deeds of service to the poor and the suffering;
who humbled himself, taking on the form of a servant;
and who showed us that the one wishing to be great

must be servant of all.

We praise you for the many ministries in your church,
and especially this day for calling people
to the ministry of word and service:
to proclaim your life-giving word in faithful and diverse ways,
to equip all the people of God for their work of ministry,
and to serve a world in need.

The presiding minister lays both hands on the head of each candidate. Other ministers may be invited by the presiding minister to participate.

Following a time of silent prayer, the presiding minister continues, praying for each candidate in turn.

Eternal God, through your Son, Jesus Christ,
pour out your Holy Spirit upon name
and fill name with the gifts of grace for the ministry of word and service.
Send your power and blessing,
that name may carry out this ministry with faithfulness and perseverance.
Let your servant's life and teaching so reflect your grace
that many may come to know you and love you
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

The assembly is seated.

Giving of a Stole

The candidate/s may remain kneeling. A deacon's stole is placed over each candidate's shoulder as the presiding minister says:

Receive this stole as a sign of your work, and live in obedience to the Lord Jesus, serving his people and remembering his promise: "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)

Other appropriate symbol/s of ministry may be given to each candidate.

Charge

The candidate/s stand. The following scripture passages are addressed to the candidate/s. Additional appropriate scripture passages may be used.

Hear the words of the apostles: Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called. (1 Timothy 6:11-12)

And again: Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. (1 Corinthians 4:1-2)

And again: Rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of hands. Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us. Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 1:6, 13-14; 2:1)

The presiding minister addresses the candidate/s.

Name/s, care for God's people, bear their burdens,
and do not betray their confidence.

Serve the needy, care for the sick, comfort the distressed,
and, through words and actions, witness faithfully to God's love for all people.
Cross every barrier that stands between the church and its ministry in the world.
Seek out those places where the gospel of Jesus Christ meets the world's need.
Empower, equip, and support all the baptized in the ministry of Jesus Christ.
Lead us all in proclaiming the gospel
in word and song, in witness and service.
And be of good courage, for God has called you,
and your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Blessing

The presiding minister continues.

The God of peace, who brought again 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 God's will,
working in you that which is pleasing in God's sight;
through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever.

Amen.

The assembly stands.

Acclamation by the Assembly

The ministers and the candidate/s face the assembly. The presiding minister addresses the assembly.

Will you, assembled as the people of God and speaking for the whole church,
receive name/s as *minister/s* of word and service,
sent by God to serve all people in Christ's name?

Will you regard *them* as *servant/s* of Christ?

We will, and we ask God to help us.

Will you pray for *them*,
help and honor *them* for *their* work's sake,

and in all things strive to live together in the peace and unity of Christ?

We will, and we ask God to help us.

The presiding minister presents each of the newly ordained to the assembly.

Let it be acclaimed that name

is a called and ordained minister of word and service in the church of Christ.

Name has Christ's authority to witness to the gospel and to serve with boldness as together we bear God's creative and redeeming love to all the world.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

After all the newly ordained ministers of word and service have been presented, the assembly may offer acclamation with applause.

Peace

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other in the peace of the risen Christ.

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace, and may say Peace be with you or similar words.

All return to their places. The assembly is seated. The service continues with the offering.

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

When scheduling a liturgy of ordination to the ministry of word and service, the rhythms and emphases of the church year should be taken into account. For example, because of their solemn character, the days from the Sunday of the Passion through Easter Day are best avoided as days for such a service.

Other days on the church's calendar lend themselves well to the ordination of ministers of word and service. Commemorations such as the following may be suitable: January 2 (Johann Konrad Wilhelm Loehe), January 27 (Lydia, Dorcas, and Phoebe), February 25 (Elizabeth Fedde), April 29 (Catherine of Siena), August 10 (Lawrence), July 28 (Johann Sebastian Bach, Heinrich Schütz, George Frederick Handel), August 13 (Florence Nightingale and Clara Maass), October 4 (Theodor Fliedner), December 26 (Stephen).

The service of ordination may take place in a congregation, or at a synod assembly, or in another setting where an assembly may gather, as deemed appropriate by the bishop.

The bishop of the synod in which candidate/s have accepted calls normally presides at the ordination of the candidate/s. If unable to be present, the bishop authorizes another bishop of this church to preside. It is desirable that one person (the bishop) preside during the service. When the service takes place in a congregation, circumstances may suggest that the congregation's pastor preside at the meal of holy communion; the bishop may resume presiding again at the sending.

Ordination is a service of the whole church, not merely of the local congregation or of the assembly that gathers. Through a note in the worship aid or by another appropriate means, the assembly may be advised that they are speaking on behalf of the whole church when receiving candidates into the ministry of word and service.

As a sign of the community of ministers of word and service, effort should be made to include other ministers of word and service in leadership roles within the liturgy. Reading the gospel, leading the prayers of intercession, distributing the bread or cup at communion, and other assisting minister roles are appropriate options.

The complete name of the candidate is used at the presentation and again at the acclamation. At other places in the service, the first or given name (without surname) is appropriate.

Preparation

Each candidate is appropriately vested in an alb, a symbol of being clothed with Christ in baptism. Until presented, the candidate/s may be seated with the congregation.

During the service, each candidate may kneel during the thanksgiving. When there is more than one candidate, it may be preferable to provide one centrally located place for kneeling. After each candidate receives the laying on of hands, the candidate moves aside and the next candidate kneels at the same place.

Presentation

At the close of the hymn of the day, the candidate/s and presenter/s come to a place in front of the presiding minister.

Each candidate may be presented by a different presenter, or all candidates may be presented by one presenter. Examples of those who may serve as presenters include a sponsoring pastor or deacon; an officer of the congregation in which the ordination takes place; a representative of the synod; a representative of the calling congregation. At a synod assembly, the secretary of the synod may present all candidates.

The words of presentation may be altered to fit the circumstances of the authorization and the call.

Address and Questions

After the presiding minister begins the address, other ministers may address the candidate/s with one or more scripture passages, or the presiding minister may say the entire address.

When more than one candidate is ordained, the presiding minister addresses the questions to all the candidates, and each candidate answers in turn.

Prayers of Intercession

Within the petition that provides for including the names of bishops, it is appropriate to use the first or given name (without surname) of the presiding bishop and of the bishop of the synod.

Intercessions may be included for the spouse/family of the candidate/s and for any special concerns related to the day.

Thanksgiving

The assembly may be seated if there is a large number of candidates or if the circumstances otherwise suggest.

The bishop presiding at the ordination lays both hands on the candidate's head. To make this possible, an assisting minister holds printed service materials. The bishop may invite other ministers to participate in the laying on of hands, placing one hand on the candidate. They may gather near the candidate during the preceding hymn of invocation. If the number of participating ministers is large, the bishop may select a reasonable number to function on behalf of all.

The laying on of hands is accompanied first by silent prayer. Then the thanksgiving is prayed, and the laying on of hands continues throughout the prayer. It is appropriate to use the first or given name (without surname) of the candidate.

Giving of a Stole

When several persons are ordained, their respective sponsors or presenters may be holding the stoles, and each may place the stole over the candidate's shoulder during the presiding minister's address. Alternatively, the presiding minister or another minister may place the stoles.

The deacon's stole, worn from one shoulder diagonally across a person's body, is an ancient symbol of the office of word and service and is given as the principal symbol of this ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The cross insignia designated for use as a symbol of this ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may also be given within the service. The following may be said:

Receive and wear this cross as a sign of your calling to serve Christ and his people. Confess your faith in the risen Christ, and bear in your heart the love of Christ who died on the cross for you.

Other symbols of the ministry of word and service may reflect a particular focus of the deacon's call and vocation, such as a vessel containing oil, a Bible, or the book of liturgy and song. The following may be said as the item is given:

Receive this _____ as a sign of your calling to the ministry of word and service.

When a towel and basin are given, the following may be said.

Receive this towel and basin as a sign that you are to serve as Christ served, humbling himself and taking the form of a servant. Remember the words of Jesus: "If I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example; that you should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them." (*John 13:14-17*)

Charge

The presiding minister and other ministers may address the candidate/s with the scripture passages, or the presiding minister may say them all.

Acclamation

After the assembly acclaims the candidate/s by responding to the two questions, the declaration beginning "Let it be acclaimed that name is a called and ordained minister of word and service . . ." is repeated for each candidate. After all the newly ordained have been presented, the assembly may conclude the acclamation with applause.

Peace

The presiding minister begins the greeting of peace. As the service continues, the newly ordained minister/s of word and service may serve in the distribution of bread or cup at communion.

PROPER S

When ordination is set within the primary service of the congregation on a Sunday or festival, the propers for that Sunday or festival are normally used. The prayer of the day for ordination may be said following the prayer of the day appointed for the Sunday or festival.

When ordination is scheduled as a part of a special service, apart from the primary service of the congregation, propers may be selected from those listed below.

Prayer of the Day

O God, through the ages you have called from among your people those who will carry out the ministry of word and service in the church. Let your blessing rest now on all who answer that call. Grant that name/s, now to be ordained to this ministry, may carry out the ministry of word and service faithfully in the power of your Spirit. Give them understanding of the gospel, sincerity of purpose, diligence in ministry, and the beauty of life in Christ, that many people will be served and your name be glorified; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Readings and Psalms

Ruth 1:1-19a *The faithfulness of Ruth*
Isaiah 12:2-6 *God is my salvation; sing for joy*
Isaiah 43:8-13 *You are my witnesses, my servant whom I have chosen*
Amos 5:14-15, 24 *Let justice roll down like waters*
Micah 6:6-8 *Do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with God*
Habakkuk 2:1-4 *The righteous live by their faith*

Psalms 20 *We rely on the name of the Lord our God. (Ps. 20:7)*
Psalm 40:1-11 *I love to do your will, O my God. (Ps. 40:8)*
Psalm 67 *Let all the peoples praise you, O God. (Ps. 67:3)*
Psalm 84 *My heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God. (Ps. 84:2)*
Psalm 150 *Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. (Ps. 150:6)*

Acts 6:2-7 *Seven are chosen to serve*
Romans 12:1-8 *Gifts that differ according to the grace given to us*
1 Corinthians 1:3-9 *God will strengthen you; God is faithful*
1 Corinthians 12:4-13 *Varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit*
1 Corinthians 13:1-7 *Nothing gained without love*
2 Corinthians 4:1-6 *By God's mercy we are engaged in ministry*
2 Corinthians 5:14-20 *The love of Christ urges us on*
Galatians 5:14, 22-25 *The fruit of the Spirit*
Ephesians 4:1-16 *Each of us given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift*
Philippians 2:5-13 *God is at work in you*
Colossians 3:12-17 *Love binds everything together in perfect harmony*
Hebrews 6:10-12 *The full assurance of hope*
1 Peter 4:8-11 *Serve with the strength God supplies*

Matthew 5:1-11 *The Beatitudes*
Matthew 20:20-28 *The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve*
Matthew 25:31-40 *As you did it to one of the least, you did it to me*
Luke 12:35-38 *Blessed are those whom the master serves*
Luke 22:24-30 *I am among you as one who serves*
John 13:12-17 *Wash one another's feet*
John 15:1-8 *I am the vine, you are the branches*

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. Let your light shine ¹ before others,*
that they may see your good works and give glory to your Fa-¹ther in heaven. Alleluia. (Matt. 5:16)

Or, during Lent:

May I never boast of ¹ anything *
except the cross of our Lord ¹ Jesus Christ. (Gal. 6:14)

Other gospel acclamation texts that may be used:

John, Apostle and Evangelist; Conversion of Paul; Holy Cross Day; Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist; Reformation Day; Lent 3, year B; Lent 5, year C; The Holy Trinity; Lectionary 16, year A.

Hymns

358 Great God, Your Love Has Called Us
400 God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind
401 Gracious Spirit, Heed Our Pleading
406 Veni Sancte Spiritus
407 O Living Breath of God/ Soplo de Dios viviente
551 The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve
576 We All Are One in Mission

577, 578 Creator Spirit, Heavenly Dove (if not used as the hymn of invocation)
708 Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love
712 Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service
743 Now to the Holy Spirit Let Us Pray
845 Voices Raised to You We Offer
878 Soli Deo Gloria

Preface Apostles

Prayer after Communion

We thank you, almighty and gracious God, that you have fed us with heavenly food, the body and blood of your Son, uniting us through him in the communion of the Holy Spirit. As you have again raised up among us faithful servants for the ministry of word and service, grant that we, with name/s, may joyfully serve you all our days and finally rejoice in your glory; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Color Red

INSTALLATION AT ORDINATION

In circumstances where a candidate is ordained and installed at the same service, the following is inserted in the order for Ordination prior to the greeting of peace. See the notes on the service for the Installation of a Deacon for additional helps with this section.

The presiding minister addresses the assembly.

Having been authorized by the church to install full name,
our co-worker in the gospel, as position,
I now ask for certification of this call.

A representative of the calling body addresses the presiding minister.

After prayerful deliberation,
we, of name of calling/employing body,
have called full name as position.
I present name and this letter certifying the call.

The representative gives the presiding minister the letter certifying that the call has been received and accepted.

The presiding minister addresses the minister of word and service.

Name, in the presence of this assembly
will you commit yourself to this new trust and responsibility?

Response: I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you carry out this ministry in harmony with the constitutions
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America?

Response: I will, and I ask God to help me.

Name, the ministry of position is now committed to you
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The service continues with the greeting of peace.