



Ordinations in the Presbytery of Newton

Congratulations on receiving your first call as a teaching elder! Ordination marks the beginning of this new chapter in your ministry. In order for the process to go smoothly, we are providing this resource sheet on ordination in the Presbytery of Newton.

Introduction

“Ordination to the ordered ministry of teaching elder is an act of the whole church carried out by the presbytery, setting apart a person to ordered ministry. Such a person shall have fulfilled the ordination requirements of the presbytery of care and received the call of God to service to a congregation or other work in the mission of the church that is acceptable to the candidate and to the presbytery of call” (G-2.0701).

The Committee on Ministry

The Committee on Ministry plays an important role in the ordination process so it is important to work closely with them. COM is responsible for recommending you to the presbytery for examination for ordination and for membership (pending the successful completion of the examination). If your call is to a particular congregation, the liaison for the church will be your primary contact. If your call is to a non-parish ministry, the Clergy Care Team of COM will guide you through the process.

The responsibilities of COM are to:

- Confirm that your presbytery of care has certified you as ready for a call. The Presbytery Leader usually contacts that presbytery on behalf of COM.
- Conduct an entrance examination to recommend whether or not to approve you for membership in the presbytery. You will need to provide a copy of your PIF, a short biography, and your statement of faith (one page).
- Review your terms of call to ensure they meet the presbytery’s minimum requirements.
- Affirm that the congregation has formally extended the call to you.
- If you are called to a non-parish ministry, COM will need to approve the ministry as validated and recommend you to serve in that ministry.

The Presbytery

Your examination for ordination ordinarily occurs at a regularly scheduled meeting of Newton Presbytery. The biography and statement of faith you provided to COM will be included in the Presbytery Packet for that meeting along with the proposed terms of call. We also include guidelines for examining a candidate in the packet.

Following the successful completion of the examination, the presbytery will be asked to approve your membership effective with the date of your ordination service and your terms of call. If COM has recommended that you be allowed to be ordained in your presbytery of care, the presbytery will also be asked to approve that request (see below for information on the ordination service).

The Ordination Service

“The presbytery placing the call to the candidate for ministry shall ordinarily examine, ordain, and install the candidate” (G-2.0702).

Your ordination service must be scheduled for a date/time after the presbytery meeting at which you are approved for ordination and normally at the church to which you are called. Upon request, the COM may recommend to the presbytery that you be allowed to be ordained in your presbytery of care. The Stated Clerk will confirm that you successfully completed your examination before the service of ordination can occur.

An ordination service is a worship service of the Presbytery of Newton. The date and time of the service should be at a time when the community of the presbytery can gather in worship. Normally the service is a Sunday afternoon or evening. However it can be other days of the week. Sunday morning is not a time when the presbytery community can gather for worship together. Only in EXTRAORDINARY circumstances (and we mean EXTRAORDINARY) will the COM consider a Sunday morning ordination service.

Normally the location of the ordination service is at the church where you have been called (see above if you would like to have your ordination service in your presbytery of care).

When setting the date of the ordination you need to consider the following calendars:

- The church where the service will take place
- The schedule of the Presbytery Moderator
- The COM schedule so you can receive approval in a timely fashion
- The Presbytery calendar so that other presbytery events/worship are not already scheduled.

The best way to try to coordinate all these calendars is to first call the presbytery office and speak to the Presbytery Office administrator, Presbytery Leader or Stated Clerk about the church calendar and the contact information for the present Presbytery Moderator.

The Administrative Commission

An administrative commission of the Presbytery of Newton leads the service of ordination. In this presbytery, an ordination commission is 5 members of the presbytery (2 Ruling Elders and 3 Teaching Elders or vice versa) plus the Moderator of Presbytery. *All members of the commission must be from separate congregations.*

It is your responsibility to work with your COM liaison to invite members of the presbytery to be part of the commission. You do have to have this information to the COM prior to their meeting to approve the ordination. Normally the COM meets the first Tuesday of the month but check with the Presbytery Office for the upcoming COM schedule.

The Moderator of Presbytery will be the moderator of the administrative commission and is responsible to reporting to the Stated Clerk the work of the commission. The Commission is disbanded and its work concluded following the benediction of the service of ordination.

The Worship Service

While the service invites your creativity and prayerful discernment, elements of the ordination service are compulsory. Please refer to the ordination service found in the PCUSA *Book of Occasional Services*. If you do not own this book we strongly recommend you secure a copy because it will be needed in your work. You do not need prior approval of the content of the worship service but we do HIGHLY recommend you consult with the Presbytery Moderator before finalizing the service.

If you would like Teaching Elders or Ruling Elders from outside Newton Presbytery to take part in the ordination service, this must first be approved by COM with the role s/he/they will be taking in the service. These elders are in addition to the administrative commission who should normally be assigned some part in the worship service. The Moderator will lead the ordination portion of the service.

An offering will take place during the worship service. This offering will be for the Presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry Scholarship Fund. The offering should be counted and given to moderator of the Presbytery OR a check for the amount of the offering sent to the Presbytery of Newton.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions please contact the Presbytery Office, 973-361-0084, or your Committee on Ministry Liaison.