

Descending Overture from the 40th General Assembly Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Descending Overture 20-A

To amend *Book of Government* G-13, “The Ordination and/or Installation of Officers.”

| Current Book of Government (2018-19): | Proposed: PJC Amendment; Additions shown in <i>bold italics</i> ; deletion strikethrough |
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| <p>Administration of vows and questions Ordination vows The person presiding shall administer the following ordination vows for those being ordained and for those coming into the Evangelical Presbyterian Church from some other denomination: Do you reaffirm your faith in Jesus Christ as your own personal Lord and Savior? Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, totally trustworthy, fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, the supreme, final, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice? Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?</p> | <p>Administration of vows and questions Ordination vows The person presiding shall administer the following ordination vows for those being ordained and for those coming into the Evangelical Presbyterian Church from some other denomination: Do you reaffirm your faith in Jesus Christ as your own personal Lord and Savior? Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, totally trustworthy, fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, the supreme, final, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice? Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?</p> |
| <p>Do you promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with the system of doctrine as taught in the Scriptures and as contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church you will, on your own initiative, make known to your Presbytery the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?</p> <p>Do you affirm and adopt the “Essentials of Our Faith” without exception?</p> <p>Do you subscribe to the government and discipline of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church?</p> | <p>Do you promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with the system of doctrine as taught in the Scriptures and as contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church you will, on your own initiative, make known to your Presbytery (<i>or to your Session in the case of Ruling Elders and Deacons</i>) the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?</p> <p>Do you affirm and adopt the “Essentials of Our Faith” without exception?</p> <p>Do you subscribe to the government and discipline of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church?</p> |

Do you promise subjection to your fellow Presbyters in the Lord¹?

Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy Ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote His glory in the gospel of His Son? Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in promoting the truths of the gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?

Installation vows:

The person presiding shall administer the following installation vows for those being installed to office in an EPC congregation: Will you seek to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties as a Christian and a Teaching Elder/Ruling Elder/Deacon, whether personal, or interpersonal, private or public; and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the gospel in your manner of life, and to walk with exemplary piety before the congregation of which God is making you overseer?

Are you now willing to accept the call of this church as Pastor/Associate Pastor/Ruling Elder/Deacon, and, relying upon God for strength, promise to discharge to it the duties required of that office?²

Questions to the congregation

When the person being ordained has responded affirmatively to these vows, the person presiding shall address the following questions to the congregation:

Are you, the members of this congregation ready to receive _____ as your *(name of office to which the person is being ordained/installed)*?

Do you promise to submit to _____ in matters of spiritual discipline, and to

Do you promise subjection to your fellow Presbyters in the Lord? ¹⁰⁹

Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy Ministry *(or the office of Ruling Elder or Deacon)* from love to God and a sincere desire to promote His glory in the gospel of His Son?

Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in promoting the truths of the gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?

Installation vows:

The person presiding shall administer the following installation vows for those being installed to office in an EPC congregation:

Will you seek to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties as a Christian and a Teaching Elder/Ruling Elder/Deacon, whether personal, or interpersonal, private or public; and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the gospel in your manner of life, and to walk with exemplary piety before the congregation of which God is making you overseer?

Are you now willing to accept the call of this church as Pastor/Associate Pastor/Ruling Elder/Deacon, and, relying upon God for strength, promise to discharge to it the duties required of that office? ¹¹⁰

Questions to the congregation

When the person being ordained has responded affirmatively to these vows, the person presiding shall address the following questions to the congregation:

Are you, the members of this congregation ready to receive _____ as your *(name of office to which the person is being ordained/installed)*?

Do you promise to submit to _____ *(Teaching/Ruling Elders only)* in matters of

¹ For Deacons, the vow is "Do you promise subjection to your fellow Church Officers in the Lord?" (G.13-7B)

² In the case of an Assistant Pastor, the phrase "Are you now willing to accept the call of the Session as Assistant Pastor..." is appropriate.

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| <p>receive with humility and love the word of truth?</p> <p>Do you promise to support _____ (<i>name</i>) with your prayers, to give encouragement and assistance in every way as _____ (<i>name</i>) seeks to instruct you in the things of the Lord and to lead you in the building of the Kingdom of God in this place?</p> <p>Do you commit yourselves to fulfill the terms of the call you have extended and to make provision for _____ (<i>name</i>) needs that the name of Christ might be glorified?</p> | <p>spiritual discipline, and to receive with humility and love the word of truth?</p> <p>Do you promise to support _____ (<i>name</i>) with your prayers, to give encouragement and assistance in every way as _____ (<i>name</i>) seeks to instruct you in the things of the Lord and to lead you in the building of the Kingdom of God in this place?</p> <p>Do you commit yourselves to fulfill the terms of the call you have extended and to make provision for (Teaching Elder only) _____ (<i>name</i>) needs that the name of Christ might be glorified?</p> |
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| <p>13-3 The Act of Ordination</p> <p>Following the congregation's affirmation, those being ordained shall kneel and members of the ordaining court or Commission shall lay hands on the Ordinand(s).</p> <p>An appropriate prayer shall be offered and the Ordinand(s) shall thereby be set apart to the office of Teaching Elder/Ruling Elder/Deacon.</p> <p>The presiding person shall state: "By the authority of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the Presbytery of _____, I declare that _____ has been ordained to the office of (Teaching Elder/Ruling Elder/Deacon), and that he/she has been duly and properly installed as (Pastor/Associate Pastor/Assistant Pastor/Ruling Elder/Deacon) of this congregation, in accord with the Word of God and the laws of this Church. As such _____ (name) is entitled to be given support, encouragement, honor, and obedience in the Lord. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."</p> | <p>The Act of Ordination</p> <p>Following the congregation's affirmation, those being ordained shall kneel and members of the ordaining court or Commission shall lay hands on the Ordinand(s).</p> <p>An appropriate prayer shall be offered and the Ordinand(s) shall thereby be set apart to the office of Teaching Elder/Ruling Elder/Deacon. The presiding person shall state: "By the authority of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the Presbytery of _____, I declare that _____ has been ordained to the office of (Teaching Elder/Ruling Elder/Deacon), and that he/she has been duly and properly installed as (Pastor/Associate Pastor/Assistant Pastor/Ruling Elder/Deacon) of this congregation, in accord with the Word of God and the laws of this Church. As such _____ (name) is entitled to be given support, encouragement, honor, and obedience in the Lord. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."</p> |
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| <p>It is appropriate that a charge be given to the Ordinand(s) and to the congregation suitable for the occasion. Following the installation, it is appropriate that the members of the congregation or the Officers and their representatives demonstrate their reception of and commitment to the Ordinand(s) by coming forward and giving an appropriate greeting.</p> <p>The event shall be recorded in the minutes of the Commission (if appointed) and the ordaining/installing Court.</p> | <p>It is appropriate that a charge be given to the Ordinand(s) and to the congregation suitable for the occasion. Following the installation, it is appropriate that the members of the congregation or the Officers and their representatives demonstrate their reception of and commitment to the Ordinand(s) by coming forward and giving an appropriate greeting.</p> <p>The event shall be recorded in the minutes of the Commission (if appointed) and the ordaining/installing Court.</p> |
| <p>The ordination and installation of Ruling Elders and Deacons</p> <p>The person presiding shall administer the vows prescribed in G.13-2A for the affirmation of those being ordained and installed and for those who have been ordained previously in some other denomination and are being installed.</p> <p>For Deacons, the seventh vow of ordination (G.13-2A) shall be:</p> <p>“Do you promise subjection to your fellow Church Officers in the Lord?”</p> <p>The person presiding shall then proceed with the vows of installation, the questions to the congregation, and the act of ordination prescribed in G.13-2B, G.13-2C, and G.13-3.</p> | <p>The ordination and installation of Ruling Elders and Deacons</p> <p>The person presiding shall administer the vows prescribed in G.13-2A for the affirmation of those being ordained and installed and for those who have been ordained previously in some other denomination and are being installed.</p> <p>For Deacons, the seventh vow of ordination (G.13-2A) shall be:</p> <p>“Do you promise subjection to your fellow Church Officers in the Lord?”</p> <p>The person presiding shall then proceed with the vows of installation, the questions to the congregation, and the act of ordination prescribed in G.13-2B, G.13-2C, and G.13-3.</p> |
| <p>The installation of previously ordained Ruling Elders and Deacons</p> <p>The procedure for installing a Ruling Elder or Deacon who has been previously ordained will be the same as that for ordination except that the following question shall be substituted for vows 1 through 9 (G.13-2A):</p> <p>“Do you now reaffirm the vows you took upon your ordination and do you recommit yourself to them in the discharge of your obligations?”</p> <p>The person presiding shall then administer the vows of installation as prescribed in G.13-2B. The laying on of hands for ordination shall be omitted.</p> <p>D. The person presiding shall ask the questions to the congregation as prescribed in G.13-1C.</p> | <p>The installation of previously ordained Ruling Elders and Deacons</p> <p>The procedure for installing a Ruling Elder or Deacon who has been previously ordained will be the same as that for ordination except that the following question shall be substituted for vows 1 through 9 (G.13-2A):</p> <p>“Do you now reaffirm the vows you took upon your ordination and do you recommit yourself to them in the discharge of your obligations?”</p> <p>The person presiding shall then administer the vows of installation as prescribed in G.13-2B. The laying on of hands for ordination shall be omitted.</p> <p>D. The person presiding shall ask the questions to the congregation as prescribed in G.13-1C.</p> |

2020-2021 Ballot Information for Descending Overture

| Presbytery | Overture 20-A - YES | Overture 20-A - NO |
|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Alleghenies | 86 | 0 |
| Central South | 55 | 0 |
| East | 66 | 1 |
| Florida and the Caribbean | 75 | 0 |
| Great Plains | 46 | 0 |
| Gulf South | 70 | 0 |
| Mid-America | 35 | 0 |
| Mid-Atlantic | 155 | 0 |
| Midwest | 86 | 1 |
| Pacific Northwest | 64 | 6 |
| Pacific Southwest | 69 | 0 |
| Rivers and Lakes | 53 | 1 |
| Southeast | 44 | 0 |
| West | 81 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 985 | 9 |