

CONSECRATION OF A BISHOP

(At the time and place appointed during a service of worship, prior to the sermon, a hymn shall be sung; the service shall proceed as follows.)

The Invocation:

Almighty God, who by Your Son, Jesus Christ, did give to Your holy apostles, elders and evangelists many excellent gifts and did charge them to feed Your flock; give grace, we pray, to all the ministers and pastors of Your Church, that they may diligently preach Your Word, and duly administer the godly discipline thereof and grant to the people that they may faithfully follow the same, that they may receive the crown of everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Scripture Lessons: 1 Timothy 3:1-7; St. John 15:15-19
(Read by a former bishop or other designated denominational official)

Then shall the presiding bishop address the congregation:

Beloved in Christ, before You stands our brother _____, whom we do earnestly believe has been chosen of the Lord and who has been duly elected by the representatives of the Evangelical Congregational Church to serve as our Bishop. In order that you may know that he is indeed well suited for this office, we shall question him as to his faith and purpose. Before doing so, however, it is well for us to give ourselves to prayer:

Almighty God, giver of all good things, who by Your Holy Spirit has appointed divers offices in Your Church; graciously behold Your servant _____, now called to the office and ministry of Bishop. So replenish him with truth of Your doctrine, and so adorn him with the strength of Your Spirit, that both by word and deed he may faithfully serve You in this office, to the glory of Your Name and the building up and governing of Your Church, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Questions *(proposed by the presiding bishop)*:

Beloved Brother _____, are you willing, the Lord being your helper, to accept the office of Bishop in the Evangelical Congregational Church?

Answer: I AM WILLING, THE LORD BEING MY HELPER.

Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain all doctrine that is necessary for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? And are you determined out of the same Scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge and to teach or maintain nothing as necessary to eternal salvation, but that which you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the same?

Answer: I AM SO PERSUADED AND DETERMINED, BY GOD'S GRACE.

Will you, then, faithfully exercise yourself in the Holy Scriptures, and call upon God by prayer for a true understanding of the same; so that you may be able by them to teach and exhort with wholesome doctrine and to withstand the opposers of the same?

Answer: I WILL ENDEAVOR TO DO SO, BY THE HELP OF GOD.

Are you ready, with all faithful diligence, to oppose and defend the church against all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's Word and, both privately and openly, to call upon and encourage others to do the same?

Answer: I AM READY, THE LORD BEING MY HELPER.

Will you deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, that you may show yourself in all things an example of good works unto others, that the adversary may be ashamed, having nothing to say against you?

Answer: I WILL ENDEAVOR TO DO SO, THE LORD BEING MY HELPER.

Will you maintain and set forward, as much as shall lie in you, quietness, love, and peace among all men and diligently exercise such discipline as by the authority of God's Word, and by the order of this denomination, is committed to you?

Answer: I WILL ENDEAVOR TO DO SO, BY THE HELP OF GOD.

Will you be faithful in the responsibility of administering ordination?

Answer: I WILL SO BE, BY THE HELP OF GOD.

The Prayer for Performance:

Almighty God, who has given you a good will to do all these things, grant also to you wisdom and power to perform the same, that He may accomplish in you the good work which He has begun, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn: "Come, Holy Ghost", sung by the congregation.

The candidate kneels.

The Consecration *(The bishops shall gather around the candidate, and if there be present any bishops of like-minded denominations, they shall be invited to join the gathering. They shall lay their hands on the head of the candidate, and the presiding bishop shall say:)*

The Lord pour upon you the Holy Spirit for the office and work of a bishop in the Evangelical Congregational Church, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(While the candidate remains kneeling, the senior bishop shall offer the Prayer of Consecration.)

Prayer of Consecration:

Almighty God, and most merciful Father, who, of Thine infinite goodness hast given Thine only and dearly beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Redeemer and the Author of everlasting life; who after that He made perfect our redemption by His death, and was ascended into heaven, poured down His gifts abundantly upon men, making some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to the edifying and making perfect of His Church; grant, we beseech Thee to grant this, Thy servant, such grace, that he may accept at the church's appointed time, the solemn responsibility of this office of Bishop of the Evangelical Congregational Church, that he may evermore be ready to spread abroad Thy Gospel, the glad tidings of reconciliation with Thee, and use the authority given him, not to destruction but to salvation, not to hurt but to help; so that, as a wise and faithful servant, giving to Thy family their portion in due season, he may at last be received into everlasting joy, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

(Then shall a bishop emeritus give the charge.)

Charge:

Give heed unto reading, exhortation and doctrine. Earnestly engage in the exercise of Christian thought and behavior and the study of the Holy Scriptures. Be diligent in the Christian witness so that the increase coming thereby may be manifest unto all men. Be to the flock of Christ a true shepherd. Hold up the weak; heal the sick; bind up the broken-hearted; bring again the outcasts; seek the lost. Be merciful and yet not remiss in administering discipline, that, when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, you may receive the never-fading crown of glory, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The presiding bishop shall pronounce the grace:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen.

A hymn shall be sung, chosen by the new Bishop, after which the service shall continue and may consist of the new Bishop's testimony, his charge to the people, etc.

At the conclusion of the entire service, the new Bishop shall pronounce the benediction.