

DIRECTORY OF WORSHIP

THE
EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN ENGLAND AND WALES

1. PRINCIPLES OF WORSHIP

Recognising that the whole counsel of God being either set down in Scripture, or deducible from it, and God's former ways of revealing his will unto his people being now ceased (WCF Ch. 1.6) we accept that:

- The purpose of worship is primarily to glorify God, not to entertain the congregation.
- The canon of Scripture is now closed and complete and that there is therefore no place for new or continuing revelation, speaking in tongues, or “organised miracle working” in the church.
- There is no place for visual representations of Christ or other objects for veneration or worship.
- Musical accompaniment, when present, is to aid the singing of praise not to replace it. It should be suitable for the serious, reverential worship of a Holy God.
- Dance and mime do not have a place in worship.
- Presbytery will recommend a range of hymn books and Psalters to the churches.
- The reading of Scripture should be from a reliable literal translation and not from a paraphrase. (The following versions are used in EPCEW Churches: KJV, NKJV, NIV, NASB).
- There being no biblical requirement to keep the traditional religious festivals, their observance should be left to the discretion of each local session.
- We recommend that ministers exercise discretion in the use of ministerial garments and reject the use of those vestments that reflect a sacerdotal practice.

2. SACRAMENTS

2.1 Baptism

2.1.1 Baptism shall be administered:

- to those adults who, not having previously been baptised, wish to join in membership upon credible profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- to the infant children of members in full communion, and to infant children where only one parent is a member in full communion.
- by a Minister in the presence of the congregation assembled together in the regular place of worship.

2.1.2 In exceptional circumstances Baptism may be administered elsewhere in the presence of a congregation but only when the Session is satisfied a valid reason exists, public intimation having been made beforehand where possible and the preaching of the Word accompanies its administration. In all such cases a report must be submitted to Presbytery at its next meeting.

2.1.3 The Session must be satisfied that the persons requesting Baptism understand the nature of the ordinance, the doctrine which it exhibits and the special duties which it involves.

2.2 The Lord's Table

2.2.1 The Session shall admit to the Lord's Table any baptised person who, in their opinion, makes a credible profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and is not being disciplined by a church. The session needs to be sensitive and flexible in individual situations.

2.2.2 Persons proposing to take communion for the first time should ordinarily do so after they have received suitable instruction, been examined by the Session as to their knowledge, understanding and soundness in the faith, and been received into full communicant membership.

2.2.3 The administration of the Lord's Supper must be accompanied by the preaching of the Word. It is not necessary to administer the Sacrament in any particular place provided its administration is by a Minister in the presence of a congregation following public intimation. Each time it is observed outside the regular place of worship a report must be submitted to Presbytery at its next meeting.

2.2.4 Each Session determines the frequency of observation. It is recommended that the frequency be not less than four times annually.

3. APPENDICES — SUGGESTED FORMS OF SERVICE

3.1 THE ORDER OF SERVICE FOR ORDINATIONS AND INSTALLATIONS OF TEACHING AND RULING ELDERS

The (Commission of) Presbytery shall be constituted.

Praise, prayer and the reading of appropriate Scriptures.

The Moderator shall declare (in these or like words): ‘In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole King and Head of the Church, who being ascended on high, has given gifts unto men for the edifying of the Church, the Body of Christ, we are met here as (a Commission of) the Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales to:

- ordain and/or installas Minister in this congregation’
- ordain and/or installas Ruling Elder(s) in this congregation’
- commission to the work of home/foreign missions.’

Ministers and Ruling Elders: The Clerk of Session or Minister shall give a brief narrative of the history of and steps taken to fill the vacancy and/or the reason for adding to the Session.

Missionaries: The Convenor, Missionary Committee, shall give a narrative of his/her application, acceptance and training for the work.

The Clerk shall put the prescribed questions as per the Form of Government for the appropriate office.

Ordination shall be with prayer and the laying on of hands; and Installation and Commissioning with prayer. Ordinands shall kneel during the prayer of ordination.

The Moderator shall declare: ‘In the Name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, we the (Commission of the) Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales declare you to be duly:

- ordained and/or installed as Minister/Ruling Elder(s) in this congregation and as such we give you the right hand of Fellowship’
- commissioned to the work of home/foreign missions: and may the Spirit of the Lord rest upon you and make you sufficient for the work to which you are appointed.

Suitable charges shall be given to the Minister/Ruling Elder(s) or Missionary and congregation.

3.2 FOR ORDINATIONS AND INSTALLATIONS OF DEACONS

Ordinations and installations of Deacons shall follow the same order as that for Ruling Elders with suitable wording adaptation having regard to the fact that the local Session, not the Presbytery ordains and installs Deacons.