

## **Ordination Review/Renewal Process Resource Document**

### **Introduction**

*(excerpts from the 2014 Ministerial Leadership paper)*

Based as it is upon the Spirit's empowerment but also upon a process of discernment and designation by the church, ordained leadership is not seen as a *right* as much as a *gift* and a naming of gifts. All licensed, commissioned and ordained ministers are accountable to both the district and the denomination. Annual Conference charges districts with the responsibility of credentialing ministers in the Church of the Brethren, and the denominational Office of Ministry works to resource and support districts in this process. Ministers remain accountable through the five-year credential review process, participating in continuing education and regular training in ministerial ethics. *(VI. Accountability)*

The Church of the Brethren Annual Conference has granted the authority for ordination to the district board. The 2014 Ministerial Leadership Paper states that, "Every five years, District Ministry Commissions, in consultation with the Office of Ministry, shall conduct a credential review process. Ministers remain accountable through the five-year credential review process, participating in continuing education and regular training in ministerial ethics. The review process is now underway and is to be completed by each district by December 31, 2025.

### **Section A. Current Area of Ministerial Service**

Ordained leaders in the Church of the Brethren, may be identified in one of nine ways:

1. Pastor of a congregation
2. Person serving a congregation in a self-supporting ministry
3. Administrator or teacher in a theological seminary
4. Teacher of religion in a school, college or university
5. Staff persons with districts, the General Board and other Annual Conference Agencies
6. Missionary assigned to pastoral or evangelistic duties.
7. Chaplain (e.g., chaplaincy in a hospital, hospice. Long-term care facility, campus, prison, or industrial setting.)
8. Person serving in a specialized ministry under the auspices of a congregation or other institutional entity (e.g., youth ministry, Christian education, camp administrator, ecumenical ministries, spiritual direction, pastoral counselors).
9. Ministers retired from their area of service.

Each case above assumes that you are a member in good standing in a Church of the Brethren congregation. A "member in good standing" means that you are an active (presence, prayers, substance) participant in the life of the congregation unless you are non-resident. If you are a non-resident but want to maintain membership in a Church of the Brethren congregation, the congregation should be clear about and supportive of you as a ministerial leader. Otherwise, you are encouraged to move your membership to a church where you can be active. If you are living in an area where there is no Church of the Brethren congregation and want to maintain ordination in the Church of the Brethren, membership in a Church of the Brethren congregation is still required, and you are expected to be a "member in good standing" as described above. Please remember you have the responsibility for nurturing the relationship in any of these circumstances.

### **Section E. Continuing Education within the past five years**

The *Guidelines for Continuing Education* adopted by Annual Conference in 2002 calls for a ministerial leader to complete work in at least five (5) of the eleven (11) focus areas listed below. This will give the ministerial leader a minimum of five (5) CEUs (50 contact hours) during the stated period. Continuing education for part-time, bi-vocational, and plural non-salaried ministers will need to take into account the pastoral/ congregational agreement and be prorated to satisfy the agreement.

The Church of the Brethren Continuing Education Report Form is available at <https://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2024/05/continuing-ed-report-form-2025-cycle-PDF-fillable.pdf>

## **Section F. Expectations of formation, training, practice, and accountability**

The *2014 Ministerial Leadership Paper* outlines certain expectations for ordained ministers. When you check the box on your renewal form you are affirming that you will:

- Be an active member of a Church of the Brethren congregation
- Affirm the expectations and commitments of ministerial leadership
- Demonstrate evidence of discipleship and a faith-filled life
- When called to serve a congregation in a ministerial leadership role (i.e., a pastoral role), I will move my membership to that congregation no later than the day of installation
- Be familiar with and comply with the 2014 Ministerial Leadership Paper
- Engage regularly in healthful spiritual, physical, emotional and relational personal practices
- Respect and take seriously the basic beliefs and practices of the Church of the Brethren as determined by Annual Conference
- Be familiar with and comply with the Church of the Brethren Ethics in Ministry Relations Paper, including participation in ethics training at least once every five years
- Demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning as evidenced by fulfilling the Annual Conference Guidelines for Continuing Education
- Have a specific ministerial call as defined under the “areas of service” and notify my district office when there is a change in my ministerial classification, i.e., movement within the nine Areas of Ministerial Service or upon retirement from any one of the Areas of Ministerial Service
- Notify my district office when I have a change of address, phone number, name change, and/or any ministerial activity.

## **Section G - Ordination Vows**

*(For all who minister, pp 298-300)*

When you mark that you will “continue to willingly commit myself to the vows I took at my ordination”, you are affirming these vows.

- Do you now renew your baptismal vows, reaffirming your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and your commitment to serve him as a disciple?
- Do you believe that God is calling you to the special tasks of the set-apart ministry within the church?
- Will you continue your search for the ways of God through prayer and meditation, through serious study of the scripture, and through openness to the witness and testimony of other voices of faith?
- Do you affirm your devotion to the church of Jesus Christ, and specifically to the Church of the Brethren, which calls you to this ministry? And do you promise to live in harmony with its principles, ordinances, and doctrines, being at all times subject to its discipline and governance?
- Will you, with God as your helper, carry out faithfully the obligations of the ministry: preaching the Word to the age in which you live, visiting the sick and the brokenhearted, seeking the lost, comforting the troubled and distressed, and by word and example leading all with whom you minister into the fullness of the grace of Christ?

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The Ministerial Leadership paper, adopted by the 2014 Annual Conference, contains a section on ministerial accountability that applies to all ordained ministers in the Church of the Brethren. If you do not have a copy of the Ministerial Leadership paper, it is available online at

<http://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/forms.html>

If you have questions about any of this, please call your District Executive/Minister or the Director of Ministry (1-800-323-8039 extension 381).