

# CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

## PRE-LICENSING INTERVIEW GUIDE

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle

### I. PRE-LICENSING

When a person expresses interest in exploring a call to the set-apart ministry in the Church of the Brethren, the congregation shall notify the District Ministry Commission via the District Office.

Individuals discerning their call to the set-apart ministry in the Church of the Brethren engage in a time of Exploration of Call, participating in the Readiness for Ministry program, gifts discernment, a background check, and meeting with a Calling Cohort at least four times for discernment, support, accountability, and the creation of a Covenant of Accountability. A Calling Cohort is comprised of an ordained mentor appointed by the district ministry commission and additional recommended participants, including a congregational companion, a district companion, and others. This calling cohort, named by the individual discerner and the congregation in consultation with the district, will remain intact throughout the calling, training, and discernment process. The responsibility of convening the group rests with the individual discerner. When the time of Exploration of Call comes to a close and the Calling Cohort has completed a draft of the Covenant of Accountability, the District Ministry Commission conducts a Pre-Licensing Interview to discuss the candidate's aims for the ministry, natural ability, moral and spiritual fitness, and willingness to prepare for the roles and responsibilities of ministerial leadership. The District Ministry Commission may invite members of the Calling Cohort to be present for the interview.

### II. THE INTERVIEW

Arrangements are made for a joint meeting of representatives of the congregation and the District Ministry Commission to examine the candidate. Such an examination should include the candidate's aims for ministry; natural ability; moral and spiritual fitness; willingness to prepare for the responsibilities of ministerial leadership; the candidate's respect for and commitment to the history, beliefs, and practices of the Church of the Brethren; a review of the Covenant of Accountability; and the candidate's personal faith perspective.

- A. The District Ministry Commission is responsible for guiding the licensing process. This document and related papers may be reproduced only for deliberation by the commission and/or its interview committee.
- B. The discerner completes the interview guide and returns it to the District Ministry Commission.
- C. In addition to reviewing the interview guide, the District Ministry Commission or its interview committee prepares questions emerging from it, as well as additional questions pertaining to the discerner's faith and life. At this stage in the calling and credential process, it is important to look for potential as much as well-thought-out theology.

- D. The District Ministry Commission shall review additional materials including Readiness for Ministry testing, background check, and the draft of the Covenant of Accountability.
- E. The District Ministry Commission is free to ask for additional materials that will assist them in the interview process. These materials may include educational documentation, and any and all materials/information deemed necessary within the context of Church of the Brethren polity and policies.
- F. If the candidate is married, the spouse should be invited to join the interview.

### **III. FOLLOWING THE INTERVIEW**

- A. If the District Ministry Commission approves the individual as a Licensed Minister, they then recommend them as such to the congregation. A congregational vote shall be taken to affirm their support of the candidate.
- B. Upon affirmation of the congregation by a simple majority vote, the district executive or a representative of the District Ministry Commission will conduct a service of affirmation, acknowledging formally the Licensed Minister's new recognition and the collaborative Covenant of Accountability during a regular congregational worship service. These actions shall be reported to the District Board. Within 30 days after an affirmation service, the appropriate paperwork will be sent to the Office of Ministry.
- C. The original document and related papers are to be retained in the licensed minister's permanent confidential file in the district office. All other copies are to be destroyed by the District Executive/Minister at the conclusion of the pre-licensing process. The permanent confidential file is open only to the candidate and District Executive.

### **IV. TERM OF LICENSE**

The term of the license shall be for the current year, with all expirations being on December 31. The District Ministry Commission is responsible for the annual review including the Covenant of Accountability with the possibility of renewal of the license a maximum of 9 times (total of 10 years).

### **V. NOTE TO THE DISCERNER**

- A. The questions in this guide are asked so that you can provide written responses in preparation for the interview with the District Ministry Commission or its interview committee.
- B. If you move your membership to another congregation within the district, that congregation and the District Ministry Commission must approve licensed status.
- C. If you move your membership to a congregation in another district, you will need to begin the process of licensing with that district.

## **VI. PLACEMENT OF LICENSED MINISTERS AS PASTORS**

- A.** The current “Ministerial Leadership” paper restricts the pastoral service of licensed ministers (see the Ministerial Leadership Paper, 2014). A Licensed Minister, in certain circumstances with the approval of the district ministry commission, may serve in a ministerial leadership role. A Licensed Minister must complete denominationally approved ethics training before serving in this way. In addition, a Licensed Minister serving in a ministerial role shall have a Church of the Brethren ordained minister as a supervisor. Therefore, it is understood that the denominational placement system is for the placement of ordained ministers and licensed ministers who have been approved for ordination by their district boards and congregations.

Office of Ministry in consultation with the Council of District Executives July, 2014

Office of Ministry  
Church of the Brethren  
1451 Dundee Avenue  
Elgin, Illinois 60120-1694

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Date \_\_\_\_\_

## PERSONAL DATA

Name \_\_\_\_\_ U.S. citizen \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No  
Last First Middle (If no, provide INS status and additional information at the end of the guide.)

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street, Box City/Town State Zip

Day phone \_\_\_\_\_ Evening phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Membership is in \_\_\_\_\_ Congregation \_\_\_\_\_ District

Date of birth: Month \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Marital status: Single \_\_\_ Married \_\_\_ Widowed \_\_\_ Divorced \_\_\_

If married, spouse's name \_\_\_\_\_

Your present school or occupation \_\_\_\_\_

### Indicate degrees received and from where

Completed seminary  
Name of institution \_\_\_\_\_ Degree received \_\_\_\_\_

Completed college  
Name of institution \_\_\_\_\_ Degree received \_\_\_\_\_

High School \_\_\_\_\_ Graduation year \_\_\_\_\_

Other:  
Graduate School \_\_\_\_\_

Certificate training \_\_\_\_\_

Describe yourself as a student: \_\_\_ Above average \_\_\_ Average \_\_\_ Below average

List school, community, or other activities in which you have had a part:

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Your responsibility</i>	<i>One or two important learnings for you</i>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

What leadership responsibilities have you had? (List the organization, position, and reflections of yourself as leader.)

List part-time or full-time employment (three most recent):

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Organization/Employer</i>	<i>Your position</i>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Health: \_\_\_ Average \_\_\_ Above average \_\_\_ Below average

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

### **MINISTRY QUESTIONS/ISSUES**

1. Write a narrative about your spiritual journey. How are you experiencing “call”? What people and events have been and continue to be influential in your faith journey?

2. Why are you interested in formalizing a call to ministry?

3. How has the process of discernment with your Calling Cohort led to more clarity about the call to ministry from God and from the church?

4. What gifts, skills, or talents do you have that you think could be effectively utilized in a call to ministry?

5. What type of church vocation interests you?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pastor          | <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administration  | <input type="checkbox"/> Chaplaincy                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Missionary      | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth/Young Adult Ministry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church Planting |   |

Other Specialty ministries (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

6. What experiences have you had that might benefit you in ministry (volunteer, teaching, administration, speaking in public, etc.)?

7. Are you aware of anything that might hinder your development and involvement in ministry (e.g., financial burden, family responsibilities, etc.)? If yes, what are they?

8. Training

1. \_\_\_ Currently enrolled in a college or seminary  
Name of institution \_\_\_\_\_  
Accredited by \_\_\_\_\_  
Degree Program \_\_\_\_\_  
Anticipated completion \_\_\_\_\_

Or

2. \_\_\_ Plan to enter an accredited  
college \_\_\_\_\_ and  
seminary (ATS) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Plan to enroll in Training in Ministry (TRIM)  
\_\_\_ Plan to enroll in Education for Shared Ministry (EFSM)  
\_\_\_ Plan to enroll in the Academy Certified Training Systems (ACTS)



9. Formation

Outline detailed plans for ministry formation including spiritual, relational, intellectual, emotional, and physical disciplines.

Include a copy of your Covenant of Accountability

10. State your understanding of the following (document with biblical and/or other writings):

a. God

b. Jesus Christ

c. Holy Spirit

d. Scripture

e. The church

f. Church of the Brethren

11. What doctrines, beliefs, practices, or statements of the Church of the Brethren are important to you? What doctrines, beliefs, practices or statements of the Church of the Brethren do you find to be especially relevant to the current cultural context? Why?

12. Which doctrines, beliefs, practices, or statements of the Church of the Brethren raise questions or concerns for you? What steps will you take to engage in formative conversations about these items?

13. I have read the current “Ministerial Leadership” paper.  Yes  No

I have the following questions:

14. I have read the “Ethics in Ministry Relations—2008” paper and accept its requirements and procedures.  Yes  No

If no, please explain:

15. Has a formal complaint of personal misconduct ever been filed against you?  Yes  No

If yes, please explain:

16. Have you ever been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor?  Yes  No

If yes, please explain:

17. If I am approved for licensed ministry in the Church of the Brethren, I understand that I will be required to uphold the Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders as adopted by the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference. I will recognize and accept the authority of the district and denomination being at all times subject to its discipline and governance.

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

If no, please explain:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Is there any additional information you would like to share that will be helpful to us?**

**SPACES BELOW TO BE COMPLETED BY DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES**

Recommendation of interviewers (if other than the District Ministry Commission):

Interviewers: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommendation of District Ministry Commission (this section must be signed by the chairperson and secretary, or by two other commission members designated by the chair):

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ministry Commission chair

\_\_\_\_\_   
Ministry Commission secretary

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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