

1 Pacific Southwest District
2 Church of the Brethren
3 Ministry Commission

4 **I. Guidelines for Mentors of Discerners/Licensed Ministers**

5 **Background**

6 The Pacific Southwest District has an ongoing concern for leaders in ministry. Continuing in the
7 tradition of calling people to ministry and providing counsel for them the PSWD has for many years
8 had a mentoring program. Mentors are usually experienced ministers who are serving or have served
9 as pastors of congregations. The mentoring relationship duties with the licensee ends if and when
10 the licensee is commissioned or ordained. However the mentoring relationship can continue, and in
11 fact is encouraged beyond commissioning or ordination if the relationship with the mentor is a
12 helpful one and if both parties agree for it to continue.

13 The 2014 Ministerial Leadership paper of the Church of the Brethren has picked up on this practice
14 and now expects all licensed ministers throughout the denomination to have a mentor, and to be part
15 of a calling cohort. This revision of the 2009 paper seeks to bring PSWD understandings in line with
16 the 2014 denominational paper.

17 Mentoring is not a new concept. Apprentice work provides a precedent that goes back hundreds of
18 centuries. Mentoring a person who has been newly called to the ministry is not only teaching the
19 content of the craft and helping the person become equipped for the task, it also entails helping the
20 person evaluate his or her call and discovering how that call is to be carried out. The mentor will
21 “walk with,” tutor, listen to, counsel, and share experiences with the licentiate. Mentoring is a
22 relationship of learning, growing, and caring.

23 **Qualifications – The mentor shall:**

- 24 1. Be an ordained minister of the Church of the Brethren with at least five years of ministry
25 experience. Exceptions to this are on a case to case basis.
- 26 2. Be a person who is mature, spiritually committed, and consecrated to Christian living in the
27 home, church, and community.
- 28 3. Be a person who demonstrates a strong commitment to the ideals, polity, and program of the
29 Church of the Brethren.
- 30 4. Have the ability to exercise mature judgment and to offer guidance and counsel.

31 **Functions – The mentor shall:**

- 32 1. Function as the lead member of the calling cohort for the discerner/licensed minister. While the
33 discerner/licensee is responsible for initiating the at least quarterly meetings of the calling cohort,
34 the mentor will provide appropriate encouragement and support for the meetings to take place.

- 35 2. Be on call to give requested counsel to the discerner/licensed minister when issues may arise in
36 the course of ministry or the licensee's educational preparation for ministry.
- 37 3. Continually check with the discerner/licensee on the status of the latter's call and how the
38 response to that call is progressing. The mentor may provide resources or information that will
39 help the licensee understand the implications of a call to ministry.
- 40 4. Support the growth and disposition of the discerner/licensee
- 41 a. Through regular prayer
- 42 b. With notes, calls, meetings for encouragement
- 43 c. By being a trusted friend who is able to keep confidences
- 44 5. Be accountable to the Ministry Commission of the PSWD and on behalf of the calling cohort,
45 and if the discerner becomes a licensed minister make report from the calling cohort to the
46 Nurturing and Credentialing Committee yearly. This yearly report will be an evaluation of the
47 licensee's progress in preparation for ministry.
- 48 6. Notify the District Executive Minister or the chair of the Ministry Commission if the relationship
49 to the discerner/licensed minister is not satisfactory.
- 50 7. Encourage the licensed minister's congregation to support and utilize the gifts of the licensee.

51 **District's Responsibility to Mentors**

52 The District, through the Ministry Commission shall:

- 53 1. Appoint a mentor for a person who expresses a sense of calling to the set-apart ministry to serve
54 as the district representative on the individual discerner's calling cohort. This will begin a time
55 of exploring call and discernment for calling, education, and direction of future ministry.
- 56 2. Provide a briefing session for each mentor regarding his/her functions and any pertinent
57 background information about the individual discerner matched with the mentor. Further
58 orientation will take place to responsibilities if the discerner becomes a licensed minister.
- 59 3. Be sensitive to the demands of the mentor role and express appropriate and periodic appreciation
60 to those who serve as mentors.
- 61 4. Send to the mentor annual report forms and copies of other materials that go from the District
62 Office to the licensed minister.
- 63 5. At the time the discerner indicates an interest in exploring ministry the Ministry Commission
64 should introduce the calling cohort program and the role of the district appointed mentor, discuss
65 its value and how the discerner could relate effectively to a mentor and the cohort. Further
66 orientation will take place to responsibilities if the discerner becomes a licensed minister.
- 67 6. Have a member of the Ministry Commission who will give attention to the mentor program and
68 processes.

69 **II. Guidelines for Discerners/Licensed Ministers**

70 **The discerner/licensed minister shall:**

- 71 1. Take the initiative to contact your mentor and calling cohort to arrange regular meetings.
- 72 2. Cooperate with the mentor in establishing successive contacts, including at least four calling
73 cohort meeting times per calendar year.
- 74 3. Engage in studies appropriate for training in ministry in programs approved by or provided by
75 the district.
- 76 4. Attend District Conference and other district events related to the growth and functions of the
77 ministry.
- 78 5. Maintain a close relationship with the congregation in which he or she has been licensed and is
79 a member.
- 80 6. Respond to invitations from his/her home congregation to participate in worship leadership and
81 such other opportunities as may prepare him/her for ministry.
- 82 7. Update the Covenant of Accountability annually indicating your ministry plan with goals for
83 preparation and practice of ministry and discuss the plan regularly with the mentor/calling
84 cohort. After consultation about the plan with the mentor/calling cohort, the plan shall be
85 submitted to the Nurturing and Credentialing Committee for review and for inclusion in the
86 licensee's ministry file.
- 87 8. Be a subscriber and regular reader of Messenger and other related Church of the Brethren
88 publications.
- 89 9. Complete and return promptly the annual report form sent by the Ministry Commission or the
90 Nurturing and Credentialing Committee.
- 91 10. Attend any meetings scheduled by the district for licensed ministers.

92 **The District Shall:**

- 93 1. Establish an active contact with the individual discerner by appointing a mentor immediately
94 upon an individual's expression of interest in exploring the call to ministry.
- 95 2. Provide for each applicant for licensing the two denominational ministry documents, Ministerial
96 Leadership and Ethics in Ministry. Present as a gift to persons at the time of their licensing the
97 minister's manual, *For All Who Minister*.
- 98 3. Make financial assistance accessible, as available, for the licensed minister to pursue a
99 district-approved educational path toward ministry.
- 100 4. Maintain a file on each licensed minister which should be passed to the new district should the
101 licensee change official residence.
- 102 5. Provide for an appropriate service of licensing in the licensee's home church when the licensing
103 is approved.

- 104 6. Arrange for the Nurturing and Credentialing Committee to meet at least with the licensed
105 minister at least once every three years for a face to face checkin (this may happen in person or
106 via video conference).

107 **The congregation shall:**

- 108 1. Encourage individuals to explore the possibility of set-apart ministry in the church. Should a
109 member express interest in exploring ministry help them contact the District Ministry
110 Commission to begin the process of discernment, and be ready to appoint a member of the
111 congregation to serve as their representative on the calling cohort.
- 112 2. Plan for the licensing service to be at a time when a large portion of the congregation can attend.
- 113 3. Provide ample opportunity for the licensed minister to participate in a wide variety of meaningful
114 congregational activities, such as occasional preaching, leading worship, assisting in major
115 services such as Love Feast, anointings, etc.
- 116 4. Give encouragement to the discerner and eventual licensee to achieve an adequate education for
117 the set-apart ministry.
- 118 5. Be alert to the financial needs of the licensed minister in achieving educational goals and
119 establish funds that could be available as grants or loans.
- 120 6. Provide at least annually for the licensee to attend an executive committee meeting or a meeting
121 of the Ministry Commission for mutual sharing and dialogue.
- 122 7. Take action annually to recertify the call of the individual to be a licensed minister.

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124 Approved by the Ministry Commission on August 8, 2009. Updated April 5, 2017.