

Priesthood of all Believers Circles of Ministry



There are several “circles” of ministry, all emerging from the larger circle of the priesthood of all baptized believers.

A **Calling Circle**, the first step toward a circle of credentialed ministry, is called forth from the larger circle of community and includes representatives from an individual’s congregation, district, and calling cohort (a small group focused on discernment during the time of calling and preparation.) Calling is a naming and encouraging of an individual’s God-given gifts for ministry in the church. The calling circle surrounds individuals with a covenant community of support and accountability throughout the calling, training, and credentialing processes.

The **Ministry Circle** consists of three smaller circles (explained inside this brochure) called forth from the larger circle of the priesthood of all believers, and is designed to call and equip leaders for a particular kind of ministry.

The **Covenant Circle** exists to ensure that ministerial leaders are accompanied throughout their life of ministry. Ministers in covenant circles offer support and accountability as they meet for continued learning, Bible study, or sharing and fellowship. They will invite others to join them on a journey of excellence, paying attention to calling and mentoring others, and covenanting to serve the church as spiritual leaders.

Calling and Credentialing in the Pacific Southwest District

In the Pacific Southwest District the oversight of calling and credentialing is assigned to the Nurturing and Credentialing Committee (NACC). They meet twice each year to interview individuals for the various ministry circles. In addition, they work to assign the district appointed mentors, conduct an annual review of licensed ministers, and work to support those who are preparing for the set-apart ministry. Recommendations from the NACC go to the Ministry Commission and for Commissioned and Ordained ministers to the Executive Board. Once approved by the District, the call must also be affirmed by vote of the local congregation.

If you, or persons you know, might be sensing a call to explore ministry in the Church of the Brethren talk with your local pastor or other church leaders and then be in touch with the District Office to talk further about the process of exploring call and entering a time of exploration and discernment.

District financial assistance is available to support attendance at Bethany Theological Seminary or for other training programs of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership.

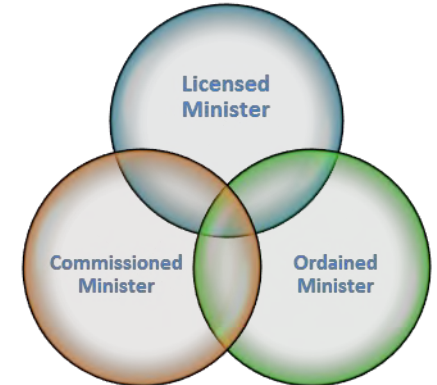
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This edition of the brochure has been modified to reflect the practices of the Pacific Southwest District of the Church of the Brethren. Those exploring ministry in California and Arizona are invited to email de@pswdcob.org.

Church of the Brethren Ministerial Leadership Paper 2014

Circles of Ministry



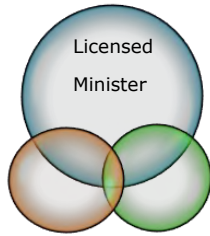
**Enabling the church
to call out more leadership,
to include all in ministry, and
to encourage intentional
discernment of call.**



Church of the Brethren

Licensed Minister

The licensed minister circle offers a restricted and limited recognition for leaders whose call has been affirmed and are in the midst of their ongoing discernment, training, and preparation for a set-apart circle of ministry.



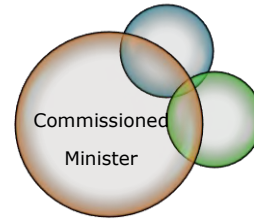
Licensed Ministers are guided by a Covenant of Accountability, which outlines responsibilities during the time of training and formation and provides guidelines and a roadmap toward one of the set-apart ministry circles. The district may annually reaffirm the Licensed Minister up to 9 times (10 years total).

Licensed Ministers are expected to: Continue discerning call, nurture relationships with district and calling cohort, practice ethical and moral integrity, demonstrate qualities and gifts for ministry, be an active member of a congregation, demonstrate commitment to the Church of the Brethren, be enrolled in approved ministry training program, meet regularly with mentor/supervisor, engage in spiritual practices (study, love feast, active prayer life, stewardship, commitment to community/body of Christ), and establish practice of attention to holistic healthfulness.

In the Pacific Southwest District, each licensed minister will be part of a calling cohort from the time they indicate a sense of call and continuing throughout the entire time they are a licensed minister. This cohort will include a district appointed mentor, a congregational representative, and one to three persons of the licensed minister's choosing. This cohort will meet quarterly to support and encourage the licensed minister.

Commissioned Minister

A minister called to one very specific ministry in one very specific setting.



The Church of the Brethren values the small-church setting, and has long encouraged both the practice of calling out those already among us to lead and the value of a minister's commitment to and covenant with those who have called them out. In addition, ministers ordained in another tradition but called to serve a Church of the Brethren congregation may be recognized as a Commissioned minister while they serve a specific congregation. The commissioned credential is not transferable from one setting to another.

Commissioned ministers will have completed training through: Education For Shared Ministry (EFSM), or Academy Certified Training Systems, or Training in Ministry (TRIM) programs, or another specifically designed curriculum of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership.

Commissioned ministers are expected to: be an active member of a Church of the Brethren congregation; demonstrate evidence of discipleship and a faith-filled life; demonstrate leadership ability and maturity of judgment; affirm the expectations and commitments of ministerial leadership, including a declaration of intention to make church service a major concern of one's lifework; 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; support the basic beliefs and practices of the Church of the Brethren; engage regularly in healthful spiritual, physical, emotional and relational personal practices; meet regularly with a mentor; participate in a cohort group for continued spiritual formation and accountability; demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning as evidenced by fulfilling the Annual Conference Guidelines for Continuing Education.

Ordained Minister

A minister called to a broader ministry that may span multiple congregations or ministry settings over the course of their lives of service.



Ordained Ministers will have completed an approved educational program: The Master of Divinity degree from Bethany Theological Seminary or another institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools, the Training in Ministry (TRIM) program or Seminario Biblico Anabautista Hispano-de la Iglesia de los Hermanos (SeBAH-CoB) through the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, or one of the Academy Certified Training Systems.

Ordained Ministers are expected to: be an active member of a Church of the Brethren congregation; demonstrate evidence of discipleship and a faith-filled life; affirm the expectations and commitments of ministerial leadership, including a declaration of intention to make church service a major concern of one's lifework; have a specific ministerial call as defined under the areas of service; be familiar with and comply with the Church of the Brethren Ethics in Ministry Relations Paper; support the basic beliefs and practices of the Church of the Brethren; engage regularly in healthful spiritual, physical, emotional and relational personal practices; meet regularly with a mentor; serve as mentor to peer colleagues and those being called into ministry; participate in and be willing to offer leadership for a cohort group for the purpose of continued spiritual formation and accountability; demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning as evidenced by fulfilling the Annual Conference Guidelines for Continuing Education.

The Commissioned and Ordained Ministry Circles make up what the Church of the Brethren calls the Set-Apart Ministry, and are individuals who by both word and deed are representatives of the faith community and symbolize the spirit that the Brethren believe to be important about themselves.