



Pacific Southwest District of the Church of the Brethren

Russ Matteson, District Executive Minister

May 9, 2018

Dear sisters and brothers,

For those who lead, teach, preach, counsel others, give advice, recommend, advocate, facilitate and sometimes potentate – we can't afford to “aim low” when it comes to knowing more about what we need to know. The world around us changes rapidly and constantly, and in order for us to effectively communicate with that world, we must have some understanding of it. We need to be passionate in our evangelism and church growth efforts, but the success of those efforts often depends on our knowledge about the changing world and the use of relevant methodology. The same is true in areas like preaching, worship, pastoral leadership, pastoral care, and many others. We are continually challenged by the emergence of new worship styles, new ways of communicating the gospel, new homiletical models, and new models of administration and pastoral care. So, pastoral leaders and congregations are encouraged to take seriously these focus areas and our district seeks to assist in helping pastors find, participate in and keep records of continuing education.

Annual Conference directs that **a pastoral leader is expected to complete work in at least five (5) of the following eight (8) focus areas during the five-year interval between ordination reviews:**

1. Biblical Studies
2. Spiritual Hardiness
3. Pastoral Leadership
4. Preaching & Worship
5. Evangelism & Church Growth
6. Pastoral Care
7. Special Ministry Areas
8. General Enrichment

This will give the pastoral leader **a minimum of five (5) CEUs (50 contact hours)** during the stated period. A CEU is equal to ten (10) contact hours of work with an accredited institution approved by the District Ministry Commission. Continuing education for part-time and bi-vocational pastors will need to take into account the pastoral/congregational agreement and be pro-rated to satisfy the agreement.

We want to do everything we can to assist pastors to **reach this goal by 2020**. We will provide information about courses being offered and ways to complete them, but it will remain **the responsibility of each pastor to find and complete the work**.


Here are some places you may look for Continuing Education:

1. PSWD Pre-Conference Continuing Education event. (0.6 units)
2. Pre- Annual Conference Ministers Event (0.8 units)
3. The Brethren Academy
4. Courses at area seminaries and colleges close to you

5. Other professional growth events that do not offer CEUs, but offer education in the pastor's desired area of interest – seminars, workshops, lectures, classes, etc. The pastor may secure CEUs for these experiences with approval from her/his church board or leadership group, a note from the minutes of the board/group indicating the approval, a flyer from the event, a copy of the schedule of the event, and a letter indicating how many “contact hours” were spent at the event. (One CEU is equal to ten (10) contact hours.)
6. PSWD offers CEUs for those who offer leadership within the District, believing that participation leads to the growth of the minister who participates, enriching their skills and contacts for ministry in ways different than academic courses. Whether serving on the District Board or Commissions, Moderator or Committees, our District offers 0.3 units yearly in the area of “general enrichment.”
7. For more ideas and links to some of the opportunities above, see our CEU web page: www.pswdcob.org/ceu

If there's one thing I still want to do with the time I have left, it's to encourage my sisters and brothers who are on the front lines of ministry. This life is not always easy – on our spirits, families or pocketbooks. For sure, it's not always fun. It is often a struggle. And so I give God thanks for each and every one of you. I pray for God's grace and peace for you, knowing the love you have for your church. May God bring blessing to you all according to the measure of God's love.

Yours,



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