

## MEMORANDUM

To: Commissioned Ministers, Church of the Brethren  
RE: **Commissioned Minister Review 2020**  
From: District Executive/Minister and the Director of Ministry  
Date: May 1, 2019

The Church of the Brethren Annual Conference has granted the authority for commissioning 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, 2020.

You, as a commissioned minister, may be identified in one of the following ways:

1. Pastor of a congregation
2. Person serving a congregation in a self-supporting ministry
3. Person serving in a specialized ministry (e.g., youth ministry, Christian education, music minister, etc.).
4. Minister retired from their area of service (remaining in the congregation where formerly commissioned).

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.

The Ministerial Leadership paper, adopted by the 2014 Annual Conference, contains a section on ministerial accountability that applies to all commissioned 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). Thank you in advance for your cooperation and prompt response by July 15, 2020.

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District Executive/Minister

*Nancy S. Heishman*  
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Nancy S. Heishman, Director, Office of Ministry

# COMMISSION REVIEW 2020

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Commissioned Minister

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Congregation

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District

## 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, commissioned 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)*

## Vows of Commissioning:

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

- 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?

**Please complete and return this form to the District Executive/Minister of your district by July 15, 2020. As you complete this form we ask that you prayerfully study and remember the words of introduction, the vows you took as you were commissioned to the set-apart ministry in the Church of the Brethren and the accountability we have to Christ and one another for our ministry.**

**I Current Area of Ministerial Service** (*Check the Appropriate Box*)  
(see the 2014 Ministerial Leadership paper, page "20" for further explanation)

- 1. Pastor of a congregation
- 2. Person serving a congregation in a self-supporting ministry
- 3. Person serving in a specialized ministry (e.g., youth ministry, Christian education, music minister, etc.).
- 4. Ministers retired from their area of service.

**II Ministry Setting:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Ministry Setting: Congregation

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

**III Membership:**

I am a member of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church of the Brethren.

I serve as an interim minister and I maintain my membership in another denomination, namely  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Denomination)

I serve a congregation with dual denominational affiliation, namely  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Congregation)

- I have provided documentation of ministerial standing in another denomination and articulated in writing a commitment to teach and uphold the beliefs, practices and polity of the Church of the Brethren.

**IV Ministerial Ethics:**

1. I have read the *Ethics in Ministry Relations* – 2008 paper. \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No  
(The ethics paper is available online at <http://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/forms.html>)

2. I have read the Guidelines: *Ministerial Service and Membership in a Former Parish*. (2008)  
(A copy is included in this mailing.) \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

3. I attended a district sponsored and/or approved training event on ministerial ethics within the past five years: Date \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

4. I am willing to accept the *Ethics in Ministry Relations* – 2008 paper's requirements and procedures. \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

If no, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

**V. Ethical Misconduct:**

Has a formal complaint of ethical misconduct been filed against you in the past five years?

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

If yes, please explain the issue(s) and how it was resolved:

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**VI. Felony or Misdemeanor:**

Have you ever been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor other than traffic offenses, or had that conviction stricken from your record?

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

If yes, please explain:

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**VII. 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 eight (8) 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.

Please provide names of courses taken, and the names of the institutions and agencies that provided the educational experiences. In addition, provide the number of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for each experience. Please include learning experiences even if formal CEUs were not given. Under CEUs name length of the session. Use additional sheets as needed.

I already have CEUs on file in the District Office

Course Title	Institution or Agency	CEUs
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

I am registered for the following growth events in 2019-2020.

_____	_____	_____
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### **VIII. Expectations of formation, training, practice, and accountability**

The *2014 Ministerial Leadership Paper* outlines certain expectations for commissioned ministers. Please check the boxes below, indicating your cooperation. I will:

- Be an active member of a Church of the Brethren congregation
- Affirm the expectations and commitments of ministerial leadership
- 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 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, or name change, etc.

**IX. My Desire** (*Check the appropriate boxes*)

- After prayer and discernment, it is my desire to recommit myself to the work of Jesus Christ and to continue my commission in the Church of the Brethren for another five years and continue to willingly commit myself to the vows I took at my commissioning.
  
- Before making this decision, I desire a conversation/meeting with the District Ministry Commission and/or District Executive to discuss and discern the continuation of my call as a commissioned minister in the Church of the Brethren.

My reasons:

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- X.** I no longer sense a calling to the set-apart ministry and thereby request the termination\* of my commission in the Church of the Brethren.

My reasons:

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\* Upon action of the District Board I will surrender and return to the District Office all my commission documents (card, certificate) within 30 days of the action.

To the best of my knowledge, the above responses are true and accurate.

Signed:

Date:

*District Office Use Only*

District Action:

District Executive:

Date: