

MEMORANDUM

To: **Retired** Ordained Ministers, Church of the Brethren
RE: **Ordination Review 2020**
From: District Executive/Minister and the Director of Ministry
Date: March 1, 2019

The Church of the Brethren Annual Conference has granted the authority for ordination 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.

Ordained leaders in the Church of the Brethren, may be identified in one of nine ways:

1. Pastor of a congregation
2. Person serving a congregation in a self-supporting ministry
3. Administrator or teacher in a theological seminary
4. Teacher of religion in a school, college or university
5. Staff persons with districts, the General Board and other Annual Conference Agencies
6. Missionary assigned to pastoral or evangelistic duties.
7. Chaplain
8. Person serving in a specialized ministry (e.g., youth ministry, Christian education, camp administrator, ecumenical ministries, spiritual direction, pastoral counselors).
9. Ministers retired from their area of service.

Our records indicate that your category is number 9, “Ministers retired from their area of service.” We are grateful for your many years of ministerial service and leadership. You have much insight and wisdom to share with the church in these retirement years. We value your presence in the life and witness of the church. We have created a special form for retirees to complete as part of the 2020 Ordination Review process.

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 unless you are non-resident. If you are a non-resident but want to maintain membership in a Church of the Brethren congregation, the congregation should be clear about and supportive of you as a ministerial leader. Otherwise, you are encouraged to move your membership to a church where you can be active. If you are living in an area where there is no Church of the Brethren congregation and want to maintain ordination in the Church of the Brethren, membership in a Church of the Brethren congregation is still required, and you are expected to be a “member in good standing” as described above. Please remember you have the responsibility for nurturing the relationship in any of these circumstances.

The Ministerial Leadership paper, adopted by the 2014 Annual Conference, contains a section on ministerial accountability that applies to all ordained 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.

District Executive/Minister

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

ORDINATION REVIEW 2020

Ordained Minister

Congregation

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, ordained 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)*

Ordination Vows:

(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 ordained to the set-apart ministry in the Church of the Brethren the accountability we have to Christ and one another for our ministry.

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. Administrator or teacher in a theological seminary
- 4. Teacher of religion in a school, college, or university
- 5. Staff persons with districts, the denomination, and other Annual Conference Agencies
- 6. Missionary assigned to pastoral or evangelistic duties.
- 7. Chaplain
- 8. Person serving in a specialized ministry (e.g., youth ministry, Christian education, camp administrator, ecumenical ministries, spiritual direction, pastoral counselors).
- 9. Ministers retired from their area of service.

II. Ministry Setting (if serving in retirement)

Name of Ministry Setting: Congregation, Agency, or Institution

Address

III. Membership

I am a member 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. Continuing Education within the past five years:

The *Guidelines for Continuing Education* adopted by Annual Conference in 2002 state that while continuing education is not required for retirees it is encouraged. Please list any continuing education events or valued learning experiences you've participated in during the last five years.

Event Name/Course Title	Institution or Agency
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

VI. Expectations of formation, training, practice, and accountability

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

- Be an active member of a Church of the Brethren congregation
- 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
- Serve as mentor to peer colleagues and those being called into ministry
- Notify my district office when I have a change of address, phone number, name change, and/or any ministerial activity.

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

- After prayer and discernment, I desire to recommit myself to the work of Jesus Christ and to continue my ordination in the Church of the Brethren for another five years and continue to willingly commit myself to the vows I took at my ordination.
- 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 an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren.

My reasons:

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

My reasons:

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

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

Signed:

Date:

<i>District Office Use Only</i> District Action District Executive Date
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