



Pastoral Ministry

HANDBOOK

Revised November 27, 2023

Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA

About the Pastoral Ministry Handbook

Most of the Pastoral Ministry Handbook outlines policies, requirements, and procedures related to the various categories of United Brethren ministers. Additional chapters deal with the stationing of ministers and other information of relevance to ministers.

All of this material is the responsibility of the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team, which is appointed by the bishop. The PMLT can revise the Pastoral Ministry Handbook at any time.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In its broadest sense, the term “minister” can be applied to all Christians who use the gifts God has given them. Within that understanding, all United Brethren members should be “ministers,” actively developing and using the gifts they have received.

In its more restrictive use, “minister” refers to individuals who have been recognized by the church as having received a more specific call from God. This call has been confirmed through a process of study and examination which has also equipped them to perform specific pastoral responsibilities within the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

The United Brethren church does not discriminate in granting ministerial credentials on the basis of gender or race.

¶1 Expectations

1. General Statement

a. All ministers are expected to model a Christ-centered lifestyle. In so doing, they will confirm the message of the death, resurrection, and return of Christ which they are to proclaim. They are to evangelize the lost, assimilate them into the church, and train those in their churches to be effective disciples of Jesus Christ as they nurture them in the faith.

b. No person shall be approved or retained as a licensed minister in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, whose life is not in harmony with the established moral, social, and family standards of the church as defined in the Discipline.

2. Spiritual Development and Lifestyle

a. All ministers should give priority time to their own spiritual development through the disciplines of prayer, meditation on the Word of God, and fasting.

b. Ministers should be wise managers of their time.

c. Ministers should be careful stewards of their relationships with all people, especially with regard to the opposite sex.

d. Ministers should use their speech judiciously, speaking evil of no one, and should take the initiative in restoring broken relationships.

¶2 Ministers in Transition

1. Pastoral Transitions

a. When ministers transition from ministerial positions, the friendships and bonds of affection they have established with their parishioners continue; however, the pastoral relationship does not.

b. Since the primary goal at the time of transition is the development of the new pastoral relationship, ministers are to operate in light of the following expectations. Violation of these provisions shall be considered trespassing, and ministers so accused shall be answer-

able to the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team.

(1) Ministers shall not communicate with members of a previous congregation in such a way that it disrupts the work of the successor.

(2) Ministers shall not perform funerals, baptisms or weddings, nor participate in any other pastoral function at their former churches or for members of their former churches, unless specifically invited to do so by the current pastor, cluster leader, or bishop.

2. Transitioning to Another Denomination/Affiliation

a. Ministers who begin service with a denomination or affiliation outside the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, are expected to transfer their credentials to that group as soon as possible.

b. Ministerial credentials with the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, become null and void upon the completion of this transition and/or two years from the beginning date of service outside the United Brethren Church.

3. Reinstatement of Credentials

Ministers desiring to have credentials reinstated with the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, must do the following:

a. Demonstrate that their credentials are in good standing from their denomination/affiliation of origin.

b. Provide evidence of previous credentialing with the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

c. Be examined by the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Team.

d. Receive a favorable recommendation from the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Team to the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team.

e. The Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team determines the appropriate ministry credential to issue.

CHAPTER 2

United Brethren Ministerial Association

¶11 Purpose

The United Brethren Ministerial Association exists to do the following:

1. Recognize all persons licensed as United Brethren in Christ ministers by the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team.

2. Secure the credentials of a minister who leaves a church and hasn't yet been placed at a new United Brethren church.

3. Secure the credentials of a United Brethren minister who is not a member of a local United Brethren church.

4. Provide ongoing credentials for licensed United

Brethren ministers who serve in ministry areas with no local United Brethren church nearby.

5. Clarify the membership status of pastors and spouses at the local church in which they serve.

¶12 Membership

1. All persons credentialed by the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team are automatically members of the United Brethren Ministerial Association.
2. All credentialed ministers and spouses have full membership privileges in the congregation they serve.
3. All credentialed ministers must submit annual reports to the bishop's office.
4. Persons holding lay minister licenses are not members of the United Brethren Ministerial Association.

Credentialing Ministers

CHAPTER 3

Categories and Pathways of Ministry

¶31 Credentialing Process

Credentialing ministers in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, is a process which involves the following:

1. Affirming an individual's call to ministry.
2. Building relationships between ministers and the denomination.
3. Preparing ministers for faithful service through education and experience.
4. Assuring that ministers are both characterized by the UB Core Values and committed to the UB enduring commitments of Gospel, Unity and Mission.

¶32 Categories of Ministry

The first step in the credentialing process is to identify the type of ministry to which a minister is called by God. The Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA recognizes three categories of ministry.

1. Ordained Elders

- a. Ordained Elders are those members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, who have been called by God to serve as professional members of the clergy.
- b. Their call has been confirmed by the church through a process of examination, education, and ac-

countability.

c. Ordained Elders are eligible to be assigned as pastors of full member congregations. They may also serve the US National Conference as cluster leaders, on leadership teams, and as denominational officials.

2. Specialized Ministers

- a. Specialized Ministers are those members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, who have been called by God to serve as non-ordained, pastoral staff members of churches in the denomination.
- b. Specialized Ministers either oversee specific areas of ministry or are planting new congregations.
- c. This designation does not include ministry support positions, such as secretarial or custodial staff, nor anyone serving as the pastor of a full member congregation.

3. Lay Ministers

- a. Lay Ministers are those members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, who feel called to use the gifts God has given them to perform specific acts of ministry and leadership in the local church, but who do not at the present time feel a special call to become an ordained elder.
- b. Typically, Lay Ministers serve under the guidance and direction of the senior pastor.
- c. Under special circumstances, lay ministers may be assigned as pastors of full member congregations at the discretion of the bishop.

¶33 Pathways for Credentialing Ministers

Recognizing that different categories of ministry involve varied processes, the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA has approved the following pathways for credentialing ministers.

(Note: Chapter 22 contains a chart which lays out the credentialing pathways, along with the requirements for each step.)

1. Ordained Elders.

- a. *Definition.* This is the ordinary pathway for ministers who desire to serve as pastors of full member congregations.
- b. *Process.* The credentialing pathway for Ordained Elders is a three-step process. This pathway begins with the Provisional License, continues with the National Conference License, and culminates with being ordained as an Elder in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.
- c. *Requirements.* Advancing through this process requires:
 - (1) Progress in the Course of Study for Ordination
 - (2) Fulfilling the expectations of ministers for a minimum of three years.

2. Specialized Ministers.

a. *Definition.* This is the ordinary pathway for ministers who desire to serve as non-ordained staff members in full member congregations or who are planting new congregations.

b. *Process.* The credentialing pathway for Specialized Ministers is a two-step process. This pathway begins with the Provisional License and culminates with the Specialized Ministry License.

c. *Requirements.* Advancing through this process requires:

- (1) Completing the Specialized Course of Study.
- (2) Fulfilling the expectations of ministers for a minimum of one year.

3. Lay Ministers

a. *Definition.* This is the ordinary pathway for lay people who desire to perform specific acts of ministry and leadership in the local church under the guidance and direction of the Senior Pastor.

b. *Process.* The credentialing pathway for Lay Ministers is a two-step process. This pathway begins with the Temporary License and culminates with the Permanent License.

c. *Requirements.* Advancement through this process requires:

- (1) Completing the Lay Minister Course of Study.
- (2) Fulfilling the expectations of ministers for a minimum of two years.

¶34 Classifications

1. Ministers in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, can be classified as follows:

- a. Lay ministers.
 - b. Provisional ministers.
 - c. Specialized ministers.
 - d. National conference ministers.
 - e. Ordained elders.
2. Specific descriptions for each of these classifications are described in the Pastoral Ministry Handbook maintained and revised by the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team.
3. Any ministers in these classifications who are actively stationed or hired by a local church, and who meet current Internal Revenue Service requirements for exemption, are considered by the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, as eligible for such exemption.

CHAPTER 4

Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Teams

¶41 Composition of the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Teams (MLOT)

1. The PMLT representatives from each region will select one or more interview teams for their respective regions.
2. A MLOT includes 3-5 licensed ministers, a majority of whom must be ordained elders.
3. Each MLOT must include at least one PMLT representative from the region of the ministerial candidate.
4. A MLOT may include ministers from other regions who bring a unique perspective and/or skill set to the team.

¶42 Duties of MLOTs

1. These licensing teams will interview people pursuing provisional, national, specialized, and ordination licenses
2. MLOT decisions must be approved by a two-thirds majority.
3. MLOTs will forward any recommendations to the PMLT, which has the final authority to grant licenses and approve ordinations.

CHAPTER 5

Ministerial Education

¶51 Introduction

A person called of God to Christian ministry is called to diligent preparation, including both education and ministry experience. Church history and the experience of the United Brethren in Christ demonstrates that God chooses individuals with varied abilities and aptitudes as his workers. In the New Testament era, both Peter (fisherman) and Paul (Pharisee) were powerfully used of God. Both Martin Boehm (farmer) and William Otterbein (theological school graduate) served faithfully and fruitfully in ministry.

Moreover, the needs of local churches for various types of pastoral leadership vary widely, and pastors indigenous to their cultures are needed. This does not mean that some should study while others need not prepare. Rather, it means that the form of preparation will vary among ministerial candidates.

The Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team oversees issues of ministerial education, including:

1. Establishing the Course of Study.
2. Approving educational institution.
3. Overseeing the continuing education for ministers.

¶52 Course of Study

The Course of Study is the educational preparation required of United Brethren ministers. Recognizing that those preparing to serve as ministers represent a wide variety of settings and circumstances, the Church of the United Brethren in Christ USA has approved several pathways for completing the Course of Study.

Choosing the pathway of your educational preparation is a critical decision. As you prayerfully consider your options, be sure to consult with those who both understand the requirements of ministerial preparation and who have your best interests in mind.

As you move toward a decision, be careful not to eliminate too quickly those options that seem to demand much from you. Pursuing a quality education involves sacrifice and is essential in preparing you to offer your life as a living sacrifice. Also, it will help you to minister in a way that is acceptable and pleasing to God. Challenge yourself! Learning sacrifice now will lay the foundation of faithfulness in your future.

¶53 Educational Pathways

1. Standard Course of Study

Requirements: graduation from Huntington University with a Bachelor degree in a ministry-related field and the Masters of Arts in Pastoral Leadership.

These programs have been designed to fulfill the requirements for ordination.

2. Approved Course of Study

Requirements: Bachelor degree (any major) and Masters degree (Bible and/or ministry concentration) from an approved graduate school.

While those who pursue the approved course of study may exceed the minimum requirements at some points, they are required to cover the core topics for ordination.

3. Seminary Course of Study

Requirements: Bachelor degree from an approved college/university; Master of Divinity from an approved seminary.

While those who pursue the seminary course of study will far exceed the minimum requirements at some points, they are required to cover the core topics for ordination.

4. Specialized Course of Study

Requirements: 30 semester hours of college-level work in the field of specialization from an approved college/university/seminary, including a minimum of 12 semester hours in Bible, and the course in UB history.

This pathway is only applicable to ministers pursuing the Specialized Minister license.

5. Non-credit Course of Study

Requirements: an educational program designed for

persons whose life circumstances prohibit completing a Master's degree.

Use of this pathway must be approved by the Director of Ministerial Licensing in consultation with the regional Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Team.

¶54 Core Topics for Ordination

To qualify for ordination, persons must complete the following core topics. Each is expected to be the equivalent of a three-credit college-level course. Alternatives must be approved, in advance, by the Director of Ministerial Licensing. Topics marked with an asterisk (*) are required for advancement to the National Conference License.

1. Personal Discipline

- a. Spiritual Formation.*
- b. Bible Study Methods.*
- c. Christian World View.
- d. Christian Ethics.
- e. Ministry in the Marketplace.

2. Bible, History, and Theology

- a. Old Testament Survey.*
- b. New Testament Survey.*
- c. Church History Survey.
- d. Intro to Theology.*
- e. Advanced Theology.
- f. Bible Elective 1.*
- g. Bible Elective 2.*

3. Pastoral Ministry

- a. Pastoral Counseling.*
- b. Preaching.*
- c. Intro to Pastoral Ministries.*
- d. Ministry Internship.
- e. Pastoral Ministry Elective.

4. Church Ministry

- a. Worship.
- b. Christian Education
- c. Disciple Making.
- d. Equipping.
- e. Evangelism.*
- f. Missions.
- g. Church Leadership/Management.”

¶55 Timelines, Transfers, and Record Keeping

1. Timelines

A period of 10 years is allowed for completing the Course of Study. This period of time begins the date you are granted the Provisional License. In extenuating circumstances, the PMLT may grant a leave of absence and extend the time limit accordingly.

2. Transfers

Transferring between educational providers and educational pathways may mean the minister will be required to take more courses than originally planned in order to complete the Course of Study. Be sure to consult with the Director of Ministerial Licensing prior to making changes.

3. Record Keeping

It is the responsibility of the minister to keep records from educational providers and provide them to the PMLT as requested throughout the completion of the Course of Study.

¶56 Criteria for Approving Seminaries

For a graduate school to be approved, the following criteria must be met:

1. The school must be evangelical in nature.
2. The doctrine of the school must be compatible with the United Brethren Confession of Faith.
3. The school must be accredited by the Association of Theological Schools or a regional accrediting agency (such as the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education or the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools).

¶57 Approved Graduate Schools

The PMLT has approved the following graduate schools. Specific names of degrees may vary from institution to institution. Not all degrees offered by these institutions meet ordination requirements.

- Asbury Theological Seminary (Wilmore, Kent.).
- Ashland Theological Seminary (Ashland, Ohio).
- Bethel University (Mishawaka, Ind.).
- Bethel Theological Seminary (St. Paul, Minn.).
- Dallas Theological Seminary (Dallas, Texas).
- Evangelical Seminary (Myerstown, Pa.).
- Grace Theological Seminary (Winona Lake, Ind.).
- Gordon-Conwell Seminary (Boston, Mass.).
- Master's College (Santa Clarita, Calif.).
- Nazarene Theological Seminary (Kansas City, Mo.).
- Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Deerfield, Ill.).
- Western Evangelical Theological Seminary (Portland, Ore.).
- Wheaton College Graduate School (Wheaton, IL)
- Winebrenner Theological Seminary (Findlay, Ohio).

¶58 Continuing Education for Elders

All elders who are actively serving in a local church are required to complete two continuing education units (CEUs) and read four ministry-related books during each calendar year. (Each CEU is the equivalent of 10 hours of classroom contact time.) Reports for each are to be filed with the bishop and cluster leader.

CHAPTER 6

Status of Ministerial Credentials

¶61 Good Standing

1. Ministers who are living consistently with the expectations and obligations of ministers as described in the Discipline are considered to be in Good Standing.

2. Such ministers are free to perform any of the duties of the ministry enabled by the minister's level of license.

¶62 Under Supervision

1. There are times when a minister holding credentials is dealing with issues which do not require removal from ministry, but where formal supervision may be of great help. In those cases, the bishop and director of Ministerial Licensing may at their discretion place the minister Under Supervision.

2. A Supervision Team will provide accountability, guidance and support. The members of the Supervision Team are appointed by and accountable to the bishop.

3. There is no change in credential or in status while Under Supervision.

4. This designation and its results will remain confidential unless the minister fails to respond positively to the Supervision Team. In that case, the minister's credentials will be placed in Probation.

5. Ministers Under Supervision are expected to submit an annual minister's report.

6. Ministers Under Supervision are eligible to serve as a clergy representative to the US National Conference according to the rules specified in Discipline.

¶63 Inactive Status

1. There are times when a minister holding credentials steps away from active ministry assignment for an indefinite period of time. In those cases, the bishop and director of Ministerial Licensing may at their discretion place the minister in Inactive Status. They will report such status to the PMLT.

2. An Inactive minister is exempted from assignment during this status and shall not perform any of the duties of the ministry, except at the bishop's discretion.

3. After remaining in this status for two years, the minister shall surrender ministerial credentials to the bishop, through a signed letter, to be held in trust until such time as the minister re-enters active service.

4. Returning to active ministry must be approved by the bishop, director of Ministerial Licensing, and the PMLT.

5. Inactive ministers are expected to submit an annual minister's report.

6. Inactive ministers are not eligible to serve as either clergy or lay representatives to the US National Conference.

¶64 Probation

1. Ministers will be assigned Probation status when they are alleged to be living inconsistently with the expectations and obligations of ministers as described in the Discipline, or are under investigation for such.
 2. Probation status will be assigned by the bishop in consultation with the PMLT.
 3. The bishop will assign a Restoration Team to meet with the minister and any other parties involved in order to discern the reality and seriousness of the situation.
 - a. The members of the Restoration Team are accountable to the bishop.
 - b. During this period, the minister may perform any of the duties of the ministry at the bishop's discretion.
 4. The bishop has the authority to do the following:
 - a. Act immediately to suspend the credentials of any minister when credible evidence exists that the minister is guilty of living inconsistently with the expectations and obligations of ministers as described in the Discipline.
 - b. Determine that the minister may continue in ministry under the direction of the Restoration Team, who will facilitate a restoration process as detailed in the Pastoral Ministry Handbook.
 5. Ministers under Probation are expected to submit an annual minister's report.
 6. Ministers under Probation are not eligible to serve as either clergy or lay representatives to the US National Conference.

¶65 Suspended

1. Ministers who are found to be living inconsistently with the expectations and obligations of ministers as described in the Discipline will be assigned Suspended status by the bishop in consultation with the PMLT.
 2. Suspended ministers shall not perform any of the duties of the ministry.
 3. Suspended ministers shall surrender ministerial credentials to the bishop, through a signed letter, to be held in trust until such time as the full restoration process is completed (as detailed in the Pastoral Ministry Handbook).
 4. Failure to respond positively to the restoration process will result in the minister's credentials being revoked at the discretion of the bishop in consultation with the PMLT.
 5. Suspended ministers are expected to submit an annual minister's report.
 6. Suspended ministers are not eligible to serve as either clergy or lay representatives to the US National Conference.

¶66 Revoked

1. The bishop may recommend to the PMLT the revoking of ministerial credentials when:
 - a. The fact of misconduct is beyond question.
 - b. The bishop and director of Ministerial Licensing determine that a minister under Supervision, Probation, or Suspension cannot be restored to ministerial service.

2. A minister whose license has been revoked may appeal the decision to the Executive Leadership Team.
3. A minister whose license has been revoked must surrender ministerial credentials, through a signed letter, to the bishop.
4. Such ministers are not eligible to serve as either clergy or lay representatives to the US National Conference.

CHAPTER 7

Transferring Credentials

¶71 Elders from Other Denominations, Associations, or churches

1. Requirements

- Ordained ministers from other denominations, associations, or churches who seek to be ordained by the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, must:
- a. Demonstrate that their ordinations are still considered to be in good standing from their denomination of origin.
 - b. Provide documentation that verifies they meet the educational requirements for ordination in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.
 - c. Submit written answers to the Questions Asked of Ordination Candidates and the references required at the ordination level.

2. Examination

- These elders will be examined by the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Team (MLOT).
- a. Once that examination has occurred and a favorable recommendation has been approved by the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team, these elders will be granted a Provisional license.
 - b. Should the written answers need to be further developed, the minister will be given direction by the MLOT and will receive an additional interview within the following 6 months.

3. Granting License

- Upon completion of the one year of service requirement, approval of the MLOT, and the course in United Brethren church history, the minister will be granted ordination in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

4. Ministers 35 and Older

- Ministers from other denominations who are over 35 years of age will be permitted to meet the educational requirements for ordination as outlined in chapter 14.

¶72 Ministers Being Received Along with a Congregation

1. Process with the Congregation

- a. Ministers being received along with a congregation

into membership work through a process of conversations and meetings with multiple denominational officials.

b. This process assures that both the pastor and congregation understand and agree with the Core Values, Confession of Faith, and Discipline of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

c. This process typically lasts at least one year.

2. Process with the Pastor

At the prompting of the bishop, the director of Ministerial Licensing assures that the pastor has done the following:

a. Completed the course of study for ordination.

b. Served for a minimum of two years as pastor of the congregation being received.

c. Demonstrates a level of faithfulness and competency which warrants consideration for the status of ordained elder.

d. Submits to a background check as determined by the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team.

e. Provides the reference forms as prescribed for ordination.

f. Submits written answers to the “Questions Asked of Candidates for Ordination.”

3. Process with the MLOT

a. The regional Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Team examines the pastor as prescribed for ordination. Once that examination has occurred and a favorable recommendation has been approved by the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team, the pastor will be granted a Provisional License in conjunction with the congregation being received.

b. Upon completion of one year of service and the course in United Brethren History, the minister will be interviewed again by the regional Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Team. This interview will include updated references from the cluster leader, the local board chair, and the bishop. It may also include updated written answers to the “Questions asked of Candidates for Ordination.”

c. Once that examination has occurred and a favorable recommendation has been approved, the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team will grant ordination status.

¶173 Ministers with Credentials from other Denominations, Affiliations, or Churches

1. Ministers with credentials other than ordination from other denominations, affiliations or churches will be received at the Provisional license level. The normal process, as specified in the Pastoral Ministry Handbook, will apply.

2. Upon receiving the Provisional license, the minister will choose between the Specialized Minister or Ordained Elder pathways. The normal processes for these licenses, as specified in the Handbook, will apply.

License Descriptions

CHAPTER 8

Lay Ministers

¶101 Description

The lay minister license is granted by a local church to affirm a person’s call to ministry in the local church. They intend to use the gifts God has given them to perform specific acts of ministry and leadership in the local churches where they are members, under the guidance and direction of the senior pastor.

This license is used for those who are recognized volunteer or paid staff in a local church. Persons holding this license are not assumed to be pursuing status as a specialized minister, national conference minister, or ordained elder.

¶102 Qualifications

To become a candidate for a lay minister license, persons must do the following:

1. Hold membership in the local United Brethren church to which they apply for at least one year.
2. Verify that they have completed the equivalent of a standard high school education.
3. Demonstrate the following:
 - a. Faithfulness to the membership, family, and social standards of the church (UB Discipline, chapters 4-6).
 - b. Conformity to the general expectations of ministers (UB Discipline, chapter 7).

¶103 Licensing of the Lay Minister

The following procedure is established for the licensing of a lay minister.

1. Referral of the Senior Pastor

After consulting with the candidate to determine God’s call and the candidate’s suitability for ministry, the senior pastor shall refer the candidate to an examining committee.

2. Examination

a. The senior pastor shall arrange for an examining committee composed of the cluster leader (or his appointee), the senior pastor, and one other member of the local church.

b. The cluster leader will serve as chairman of the examining committee.

3. References

The candidate shall present three references giving evidence of the candidate's faithfulness in Christian living and suitability of service using the Ministerial Reference for Ministerial Licensing form. References should be obtained from the following individuals:

- a. The senior pastor of the church where the candidate is a member.
- b. A layperson serving in leadership at the local United Brethren church the candidate attends.
- c. The chairperson of the Personnel Relations Team of the church where the candidate is a member.

4. Written Responses

The candidate shall provide written responses to the following:

- a. Do you believe our Confession of Faith as set forth in our Discipline?
- b. Describe your conversion experience, journey of faith, and call to ministry.
- c. What is your motive in seeking this lay minister license?
- d. Are you satisfied with the moral and social standards and the government of the church, and will you maintain them on all occasions?
- e. Will you submit yourself to the official counsel of your fellow Christians?
- f. Define the following terms: depravity, redemption, faith, repentance, justification, regeneration, and sanctification.
- g. Is it your purpose, if received, to remain permanently with the church?
- h. Have you ever pled guilty to or been convicted of any crime?
- i. Have you ever been charged with child neglect or abuse?
- j. Has your driver's license ever been suspended or revoked?
- k. Is your use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs consistent with the standards detailed in Discipline, Chapter 6, Paragraph 143? If not, please explain.

5. Other Documents

The candidate shall submit a copy of his/her high school and/or college diploma.

6. Examination

Based on the above documents and any others the committee may require, the candidate shall be examined to determine matters of:

- a. Personal integrity.
- b. Commitment to the Christian faith.
- c. Ministerial call.
- d. Relationships with others.
- e. Spiritual maturity.
- f. Understanding of the doctrinal distinctives, history, and polity of the Church of the United Brethren in

Christ, USA.

7. Report to the Local Church

- a. Following the examination, the examining committee shall report its findings to the local church and make any recommendations it deems consistent with its findings.
- b. Pending a favorable recommendation from the examining committee, the local church may choose to grant a lay minister license.

8. Notify the Bishop

The cluster leader shall file a report of the examination and action taken with the bishop. This report should include copies of all documentation presented to the committee.

¶104 Licensing Status

1. *Temporary License.* Prior to completion of the course of study (outlined below), the lay minister license is considered temporary and must be renewed annually until a permanent license is obtained.
2. *Permanent License.* When the course of study has been completed, the examining committee shall once again examine the candidate. If the committee so recommends, the local church may grant a Permanent Lay Minister license to the candidate.

¶105 Course of Study

1. All persons who have been granted a temporary lay minister license shall pursue a course of study in which they shall read and be examined on 16 books. These books shall be chosen from a reading list prepared by the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team.
2. To be eligible for annual renewal, those holding a temporary license must read and pass an examination on four books. The examination will be administered by the senior pastor. When 16 books have been read and the examinations passed, the candidate shall be eligible for a permanent lay minister license.

¶106 Transferring the License

When the lay minister, both permanent and temporary, transfers membership from one United Brethren church to another, the license is automatically transferred once the receiving church has confirmed the transfer of membership.

¶107 Loss of the License

1. Local churches have the authority to revoke the license of a lay minister whose life and/or ministry are inconsistent with the expectations detailed in the Discipline.
2. Failure to retain membership in a United Brethren church will also result in loss of license.

¶108 Annual Renewal of Temporary License

1. The Temporary License must be renewed each year by the local church, with a notation of the action taken made on the license by the cluster leader.
2. Renewal is subject to the following conditions:
 - a. An annual report must be made to the local church. This report may be made in person or in writing.
 - b. Progress is being made in the required course of study (as stated above). Should a lay minister fail to complete the equivalent of two years of academic work within any four-year period, the license shall be considered null and void.

¶109 Expectations of Lay Ministers

In addition to the general expectations of all ministers and members in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, lay ministers are expected to faithfully fulfill the following.

1. Annual Reporting

- a. Lay ministers, both permanent and temporary, are expected to file an annual report of their activities with the local church to which they belong.
- b. When serving as a supply pastor, lay ministers will also file an annual report with the bishop and cluster leader.

2. Accountability

- a. Since this license is granted by the local church, lay ministers are accountable to the local church of which they are members.
- b. If they are serving as a supply pastor, they are also required to participate in and be accountable to a cluster.

3. Ministerial Service

- a. Lay ministers shall work under the direction of their senior pastor and bishop.
- b. Lay ministers may be asked to fill pulpits when ministers are ill or on vacation, serve as supply pastors, or do specific acts of ministry as part of the overall ministry of their local church or the denomination.
- c. When serving as a supply pastor, lay ministers are authorized to officiate at funerals and weddings, and to administer the ordinances of baptism and communion.

CHAPTER 9

Provisional Ministers

¶111 Description

1. The provisional license is granted by the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team to those persons called to serve in a congregation of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, as a senior pastor, full-time staff pastor, or pastor in transition in these situations:
 - a. When holding credentials with another group.

b. When planting a church for the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

- c. When not holding any credential.
2. This license is granted as the entry level for two distinct tracks of ministerial pursuit.
 - a. *Ordination*. For those seeking ordination, the provisional license is the first of three steps toward ordination.
 - b. *Specialized Ministry*. For those desiring to serve in a specialized ministry area for a local church, but not in an ordained capacity, the provisional license serves as the first of two steps in order to receive a specialized ministry license.

¶112 Qualifications

To become a candidate for a provisional license, persons must do the following:

1. Hold a high school diploma (or equivalent).
2. Demonstrate a level of faithfulness and competency which warrants consideration for this license.
3. Demonstrate the following:
 - a. Faithfulness to the membership, family, and social standards of the church (UB Discipline, chapters 4-6).
 - b. Conformity to the general expectations of ministers (UB Discipline, chapter 7).

¶113 Licensing of Provisional Ministers

The following procedure is established for the provisional license.

1. Consult with Senior Pastor

- a. The senior pastor will facilitate a conversation to review the candidate's testimony, call, and suitability for ministry.
- b. This consultation will include a review of the categories of ministry, credentialing pathways, courses of study, expectations of ministers, and assessment process with the candidate.
- c. The senior pastor may utilize a variety of assessment tools during this consultation to explore the candidate's suitability for ministry.
- d. After consulting with the candidate to determine God's call and the candidate's suitability for ministry, the senior pastor shall refer the candidate to the Local Board for affirmation.
- e. If the church does not have a credentialed pastor assigned by the Bishop, the Cluster Leader or other ordained elder may provide this consultation.
- f. This element is waived if the person being licensed is becoming the senior pastor.

2. Affirmation from the Local Board

- a. The Local Board will facilitate a meeting to affirm the candidate's call and suitability for ministry.
- b. This affirmation will include a review of the candidate's testimony, call to ministry, assessment results, and anticipated ministry pathway.

c. The Local Board may utilize a variety of assessment tools during this affirmation process.

d. After receiving at least 75% affirmative vote from the Local Board, the Local Board chair shall refer the candidate for Examination.

3. Examination of the Candidate

a. The senior pastor shall arrange for an examining committee composed of the Local Board chair, the Personnel Team Chair, the senior pastor, the Cluster Leader (or designated appointee), and a member of the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team (or designated appointee). If the Local Board Chair or pastor serve as Personnel Team Chair, another member of the Local Board will be selected. If the church does not have a credentialed pastor assigned by the Bishop, the Cluster Leader or PMLT representative will arrange for this committee.

b. At least 1 week in advance of the examination, the candidate shall provide the examination team with the following documents:

- i. References
- ii. Written Responses
- iii. Background Check prescribed by the PMLT
- iv. Transcripts
- v. Minister's Profile

c. Based on the above documents and any others the committee may require, the candidate shall be examined to determine matters of personal integrity, commitment to the Christian faith, ministerial call, relationships with others, spiritual maturity, and understanding of the doctrinal distinctives, history, and polity of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

d. Should the examination reveal deficiencies in the candidate's readiness for ministry, the examining committee shall refer the candidate back to the Local Board for encouragement and accountability in preparing further for responding to God's call to pastoral ministry

4. Recommendation to Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team

a. Following a favorable examination, the examining committee shall report its finding to both the Local Board and the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team to make any recommendations it deems consistent with its findings.

b. Pending a favorable vote of the PMLT, the candidate will be granted a provisional license.

5. Next Steps

a. Once the minister has been granted the Provisional License, the lead responsibility for next steps (Specialized License or National Conference License/Ordination) becomes the responsibility of the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team.

b. The role of the local church becomes encouraging the minister to continue moving forward, providing accountability about completing the course of study, and supplying input to the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team about the minister's life and practice of ministry.

¶114 References

The candidate shall provide five references giving evidence of the candidate's faithfulness in Christian living and suitability of service using the Ministerial Reference for Ministerial Licensing form. References should be obtained from the following individuals:

1. A faculty member in the candidate's major area of study, or a previous employment supervisor.
2. A leader from the candidate's previous church or place of service.
3. The minister's spouse (if married); friend or relative (if single).
4. A pastor who knows the candidate.
5. Another person of the candidate's choosing.

¶115 Written Responses

The candidate shall provide written responses to the following, along with Scripture references and personal examples to support the answers:

- a. Do you agree with the Confession of Faith set forth in the Discipline of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA?
- b. Describe your conversion experience, your faith journey, and your call to ministry.
- c. How do you support your belief that the Bible is the Word of God and that it reveals the only way of salvation?
- d. What is your motive for desiring this license with the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA?
- e. What is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer? How is this demonstrated in your life?
- f. What do you believe regarding the nature of humanity and the individual need for salvation?
- g. Define the following terms: depravity, redemption, faith, repentance, justification, regeneration, and sanctification.
- h. Demonstrate proficiency with a plan of salvation and identify individuals you have led to Christ.
- i. Will you agree to abide by the official actions of the denomination in all matters related to ministry?
- j. Will you faithfully pursue the course of study and/or additional requirements needed for ordination or a specialized ministry license?
- k. What current debts do you have?
- l. Have you ever pled guilty to or been convicted of a crime?
- m. Have you ever been charged with child neglect or abuse?
- n. Has your driver's license ever been suspended or revoked?

o. Is your use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs consistent with the standards detailed in Discipline, Chapter 6, Paragraph 143? If not, please explain.

p. To what extent do you agree with the Family Standards as defined in the Discipline? Are you living consistently with those standards?

q. To what extent do you agree with the Membership and Social Standards as defined in the Discipline? Are you living consistently with those standards?

r. To what extent do you agree with the General Qualifications of Ministers as defined in the Discipline? Are you willing to abide by those statements?

¶116 Background Check

The candidate shall submit to a background check as determined by the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team. This shall be at the candidate's expense.

¶117 Other Documents

The candidate shall also provide:

- a. A copy of his/her academic transcripts.
- b. An updated Minister's Profile.

¶118 Annual Renewal

This license must be renewed each year by the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team. Renewal will be determined subject to the following conditions:

- a. An annual report must be made to the bishop's office for review by the PMLT.
- b. Progress is being made in the required course of study (see below).
- c. A course in United Brethren church history must be completed.

¶119 Advancing to National Conference License

1. Referral for National Conference License

- a. Provisional ministers seeking ordination may be referred to the national conference when they meet the qualifications for national conference license.
- b. Should a provisional minister be referred and not received as a national conference minister, the previous status as a provisional minister will be retained.

2. Requirements for National Conference License

Provisional ministers may hold a national conference license when the following conditions have been met:

- a. The provisional license has been held for a minimum of 12 months.
- b. They have completed the equivalent of two years of college.
- c. They have completed the course in United Brethren church history.
- d. They have met the requirements for national conference license (see handbook chapter "National Conference Ministers").

¶120 Advancing to Specialized Minister License

1. Referral for Specialized Minister License

- a. Provisional ministers not seeking ordination may be referred to the national conference when they meet the qualifications for specialized minister license.
- b. Should a provisional minister be referred and not received as a specialized minister, the previous status as a provisional minister will be retained.

2. Requirements for Specialized Minister License

Provisional ministers may hold a specialized minister license when the following conditions have been met:

- a. The provisional license has been held for a minimum of 12 months.
- b. They have completed 30 semester hours of college level work in their field of specialization, including a minimum of 12 hours of Bible.
- c. They have completed the course in United Brethren church history.

¶121 Ministers from Other Denominations

If a minister from another denomination with the equivalent of this provisional license seeks to be licensed by the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, a license will be granted providing that all other requirements for a provisional license have been met.

¶122 Expectations of Provisional Ministers

In addition to the general expectations of all ministers and members in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, provisional ministers are expected to faithfully fulfill the following requirements:

1. Annual Reporting

All provisional ministers are expected to file an annual report of their activities with the bishop.

2. Accountability

Since this license is granted by the national conference, provisional ministers are accountable to the national conference in addition to the normal accountability procedures in the local church where they serve.

3. Ministerial Service

- a. Provisional ministers shall work under the direction of the bishop.
- b. Provisional ministers may officiate at funerals and weddings and administer the ordinances of baptism and communion only under the supervision of a senior pastor.

4. Course of Study

All provisional ministers are expected to pursue the course of study outlined in the chapter "Educational Requirements."

CHAPTER 10

Specialized Ministers

¶131 Description

1. The Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, uses the term “specialized minister” to describe all non-ordained paid staff ministers employed by churches of the denomination.
2. Individuals holding the specialized minister license are not pursuing ordination, and generally are employed to oversee specific areas of ministry in a local church.
3. The specialized minister license is also used to provide ministerial credentials to church planters.
4. This designation does not include ministry support positions, such as secretarial or custodial staff.

¶132 Qualifications

Specialized ministers must meet the following qualifications.

1. Education

Complete a minimum of 30 semester hours of college level work in their field of specialization from an accredited college, including a minimum of 12 semester hours of college level work in Bible and the course in United Brethren church history.

2. Experience

Serve for a minimum of 12 months on a professional basis in the field of specialization in a United Brethren church.

3. Membership

Hold membership in a United Brethren church.

4. Qualifications

Demonstrate the following:

- a. Faithfulness to the membership, family, and social standards of the church (UB Discipline, chapters 4-6).
- b. Conformity to the general expectations of ministers (UB Discipline, chapter 7).

¶133 Licensing of Specialized Ministers

The following procedure is established for the licensing of specialized ministers:

1. Recommendation from a Local Church

- a. After reviewing his or her conduct as a provisional minister and suitability for ministry, the senior pastor of a local church may recommend that the local church refer a candidate to the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team for a specialized minister’s license.
- b. If the local church so concurs, the senior pastor will notify the bishop, and the bishop will forward the candidate’s file to the appropriate Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Team for examination.

2. References

The candidate shall present three references giving evidence of the candidate’s faithfulness in Christian living and suitability of service using the Ministerial Reference for Ministerial Licensing form. References should be obtained from the following individuals:

- a. The senior pastor of the church where the candidate is a member.
- b. A layperson serving in leadership at the local United Brethren church the candidate attends.
- c. The chairperson of the Personnel Relations Commission of the church where the candidate is a member.

3. Written Responses

The candidate shall present written responses to the following, along with Scripture references and personal examples to support the answers.

- a. How have you grown in your understanding and love of God and his ways since your last interview? In what ways has this impacted your relationship with the people where you live, work, and play?
- b. What is your view on the reliability of Scripture as God’s Word? How is that demonstrated in your life?
- c. What is your motive for desiring a specialized minister’s license?
- d. How has your understanding of and experience with the work of the Holy Spirit in your life grown since your last interview?
- e. In what ways are you maturing in your belief of the nature of humanity and the individual need for salvation?
- f. Define the following terms: Trinity, incarnate, atonement, communion of saints, inspiration.
- g. Describe your practice of evangelism. Share the story of the last person you led to Christ.
- h. Will you submit to spiritual authority and agree to abide by the official actions of the denomination in all matters relating to your ministry?
- i. Are you satisfied with the membership, family, and social standards, and with the government of this denomination, and will you seek to maintain them? What concerns, if any, do you have?
- j. What are your future plans regarding ministry as they pertain to this license?
- k. What current debts do you have?
- l. Have you ever pled guilty to or been convicted of any crime?
- m. Have you ever been charged with child neglect or abuse?
- n. Has your driver’s license ever been suspended or revoked?
- o. Is your use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs consistent with the standards detailed in Discipline, Chapter 6, Paragraph 143? If not, please explain.
- p. Describe the ways in which your marriage/family relationships are in harmony with the “Family Standards” chapter of the Discipline.

- q. What role does your area of ministry play in the overall ministry of the church?
- r. What is your understanding of staff relationships in the church?
- s. Explain your philosophy of ministry as it relates to your specific area of specialization.

4. Other Documents

The candidate shall also provide:

- a. A copy of his/her academic transcripts.
- b. An updated Minister's Profile.
- c. The Minister's Spouse Survey (if married).

5. Examination

Based on the above documents and any others the examining committee may require, the candidate shall be examined to determine matters of:

- a. Personal integrity.
- b. Commitment to the Christian faith.
- c. Ministerial call.
- d. Relationships with others.
- e. Spiritual maturity.
- f. Understanding of the doctrinal distinctives, history, and polity of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

6. Recommendation to the PMLT

Following the examination, the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Team will report its findings to the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team and make any recommendations it deems consistent with its findings.

Pending a favorable recommendation from the examining committee, the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team may choose to grant a specialized minister's license.

¶134 Loss of the License

The bishop and/or Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team shall have the authority to revoke the license of specialized ministers whose lives and ministries are inconsistent with the expectations detailed in the Discipline. Should they desire, specialized ministers shall be granted an opportunity for a hearing before final action is taken.

¶135 Ordination

If specialized ministers decide to pursue ordination, this license will be deemed the equivalent of a national conference license, pending the completion of all additional requirements for national conference license.

¶136 Expectations of Specialized Ministers

In addition to the general expectations of all ministers and members in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, specialized ministers are expected to faithfully fulfill the following requirements:

1. Annual Reporting

All specialized ministers are expected to file an annual report of their activities with the bishop.

2. Accountability

Since this license is granted by the national conference, specialized ministers are accountable to the national conference in addition to the normal accountability procedures in the local church where they serve.

3. Ministerial Service

Specialized ministers shall work under the direction of their senior pastors or bishop. They may officiate at funerals and weddings and administer the ordinances of baptism and communion only under the supervision of a senior pastor.

CHAPTER 11

National Conference Ministers

¶141 Description

1. National conference ministers are those members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, whose call to the ministry has been affirmed by the national conference and who are continuing the pursuit of ordination.

2. The national conference license is the second of three steps toward ordination, which is the goal expected of persons holding this license.

¶142 Qualifications

To become a candidate for this license, a person must fulfill the following:

- 1. Hold a provisional license for at least 12 months.
- 2. Complete two years of college and the course in United Brethren church history.
- 3. Demonstrate a level of faithfulness and competency which warrants consideration for a national conference license.
- 4. Demonstrate the following:
 - a. Faithfulness to the membership, family, and social standards of the church (UB Discipline, chapters 4-6)..
 - b. Conformity to the general expectations of ministers (UB Discipline, chapter 7).

¶143 Licensing of National Conference Ministers

The following procedure is established for the licensing of national conference ministers.

1. Referral for National Conference License

- a. After provisional ministers have held their license for a minimum of 12 months, they may request that

their local churches refer them for consideration as national conference ministers.

b. The local church shall verify that the minister has met the qualifications, and shall make the appropriate referral should they deem the minister to be a suitable candidate.

c. After provisional ministers have held their license for a minimum of 12 months, they qualify for national conference license if:

- (1) They have taken the course in United Brethren history.
- (2) They have met the educational requirements.

2. References

The candidate shall present five references giving evidence of the candidate's faithfulness in Christian living and suitability of service using the Ministerial Reference for Ministerial Licensing form. References should be obtained from the following individuals:

- a. A faculty or graduate school member in the candidate's major area of study. This is not necessary if education was completed at a previous level.
- b. The pastor of the local United Brethren church the candidate attends (or, if the candidate is the pastor, from another United Brethren pastor).
- c. A layperson serving in leadership at the local United Brethren church the candidate attends.
- d. The cluster leader.
- e. A Personnel Team Chair or its equivalent.

3. Written Responses

The candidate shall present written responses to the following, along with Scripture references and personal examples to support the answers:

- a. How have you grown in your understanding and love of God and his ways since your last interview? In what ways has this impacted your relationship with the people where you live, work, and play?
- b. What is your view on the reliability of Scripture as God's Word? How is that demonstrated in your life?
- c. What is your motive for desiring a national conference license?
- d. How has your understanding of and experience with the work of the Holy Spirit in your life grown since your last interview? How has that been demonstrated in your life?
- e. In what ways are you maturing in your belief of the nature of humanity and the individual need for salvation?
- f. Define the following terms: Trinity, incarnate, communion of saints, inspiration, revelation, grace, resurrection.
- g. Describe your practice of evangelism. Share the story of the last person you led to Christ.
- h. Will you submit to spiritual authority and agree to abide by the official actions of the denomination in all matters relating to your ministry? Do you have any reservations about so doing?

i. Are you satisfied with the membership, family, and social standards and with the government of this denomination, and will you seek to maintain them? What concerns, if any, do you have?

j. What are your future plans regarding ministry as they pertain to this license?

k. Will you faithfully pursue the course of study required for you? What is your plan for so doing?

l. Demonstrate your working knowledge of the Discipline in the following areas: the reception and duties of members, local church structure, and the classifications and duties of ministers.

m. What current debts do you have?

n. Have you ever pled guilty to or been convicted of any crime?

o. Have you ever been charged with child neglect or abuse?

p. Has your driver's license ever been suspended or revoked?

q. Is your use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs consistent with the standards detailed in Discipline, Chapter 6, Paragraph 143? If not, please explain.

r. Describe the ways in which your marriage/family relationships are in harmony with the "Family Standards" chapter of the Discipline.

s. Demonstrate your understanding and practice of biblical conflict resolution based on Matthew 18. Provide specific examples of times you have applied these principles in the church.

4. Other Documents

The candidate shall also provide:

- a. A copy of his/her academic transcripts.
- b. An updated Minister's Profile.
- c. The Minister's Spouse survey (if married).

5. Examination

Based on the above documents and any others the committee may require, the candidate shall be examined to determine matters of:

- a. Personal integrity.
- b. Commitment to the Christian faith.
- c. Ministerial call.
- d. Relationships with others.
- e. Spiritual maturity.
- f. Understanding of the doctrinal distinctives, history, and polity of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

6. Report to the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team

a. Following the examination, the examining committee shall report its findings to the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team and make any recommendations it deems consistent with its findings.

b. Pending a favorable recommendation from the examining committee, the Pastoral Ministry Leadership

Team may choose to grant a national conference license.

¶144 Renewal

1. The national conference license is valid for four years. Following this initial four-year period, annual renewal is required.
2. Renewal is subject to the following conditions:
 - a. An annual report must be made to the bishop.
 - b. Progress is being made in the required course of study (see below).

¶145 Referral for Ordination Status

1. National conference ministers may be referred for ordination status when they meet the qualifications for ordination.
2. If ordination status is not granted, the previous status as a national conference minister will be retained.

¶146 Loss of the License

1. The Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team shall have the authority to revoke the license of a national conference minister whose life and ministry is inconsistent with the expectations detailed in the Discipline.
2. Should they desire, the national conference minister shall be granted an opportunity for a hearing before final action is taken.

¶147 Expectations of National Conference Ministers

In addition to the general expectations of all ministers and members in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, national conference ministers are expected to faithfully fulfill the following requirements:

1. Annual Reporting

All national conference ministers will file an annual report with the bishop and cluster leader. In addition, they are expected to file a separate annual report of their activities with the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team.

2. Accountability

- a. Since this license is granted by the national conference, national conference ministers are accountable to the national conference.
- b. Those who are senior pastors are also required to participate in and be accountable to a cluster.

3. Ministerial Service

- a. National conference ministers shall work under the direction of the bishop.
- b. National conference ministers may be asked to fill pulpits when ministers are ill or on vacation, or to be assigned as the senior pastor of a local church.
- c. National conference ministers are authorized to officiate at funerals and weddings, and to administer the ordinances of baptism and communion.

4. Course of Study

All national conference ministers are expected to pursue a course of study outlined in the chapter “Ministerial Education.”

CHAPTER 12

Ordained Elders

¶151 Description

Elders are those members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, who have been called by God and are pursuing employment as professional members of the clergy. Their call has been confirmed by the church through a process of examination, education, and accountability.

¶152 Qualifications

To become a candidate for ordination, a national conference minister must accomplish the following:

1. Complete the course of study for ordination in the Church of the United Brethren Brethren in Christ, USA, outlined in the chapter “Ministerial Education.”
2. Hold a national conference license for at least two years.
3. Serve for two years in a recognized ministry appointment approved by the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team.
4. Demonstrate a level of faithfulness and competency which warrants consideration for the status of ordained elder.

¶153 Procedure for Ordaining Ministers

The following procedure is established for the ordination of ministers.

1. Request of the National Conference Minister

After holding a national conference license for a minimum of two years, individuals may submit a request to the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team for consideration for the office of ordained elder in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

2. Reference Letters

The applicant shall submit five references giving evidence of the applicant’s marriage and family relationships, interpersonal relationships and social skills, and faithfulness in Christian living. The letters should be obtained from the following individuals:

- a. A faculty or graduate school member in the candidate’s major area of study. This is not necessary if education was completed at a previous level.
- b. The senior pastor of the local United Brethren church the candidate attends (or, if the candidate is the senior pastor, from another United Brethren pastor).
- c. A layperson serving in leadership at the local

United Brethren church the candidate attends.

- d. The cluster leader.
- e. A local board chair.

3. Written Responses

The applicant shall submit responses to the questions in the chapter, “Questions Asked of Candidates for Ordination.”

4. Other Documents

The candidate shall also provide:

- a. A copy of his/her academic transcripts.
- b. An updated Minister’s Profile.

5. Examination

Based on the above documents and any others the committee may require, the candidate shall be examined to determine matters of:

- a. Personal integrity.
- b. Commitment to the Christian faith.
- c. Ministerial call.
- d. Relationships with others.
- e. Spiritual maturity.
- f. Understanding of the doctrinal distinctives, history, and polity of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

6. Report to the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team

a. Following the examination, the examining committee shall report its findings to the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team and make any recommendations it deems consistent with its findings.

b. Pending a favorable recommendation from the examining committee, the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team may choose to grant ordination status.

¶154 Loss of the License

1. The Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team shall have the authority to revoke the credentials of any elders whose lives and ministries are inconsistent with the expectations detailed in the Discipline.

2. Should they desire, elders shall be granted an opportunity for a hearing before final action is taken.

¶155 Expectations of Elders

In addition to the general expectations of all ministers and members in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, elders are expected to faithfully fulfill the following.

1. Annual Reporting

All elders must file an annual report of their activities with the bishop and cluster leader.

2. Accountability

Since this license is granted by the national con-

ference, ordained ministers are accountable to the national conference.

3. Ministerial Service

- a. Elders shall work under the direction of the bishop.
- b. Elders are authorized to officiate at funerals and weddings, and to administer the ordinances of baptism and communion.
- c. No ordained elder is guaranteed a pastoral assignment in the denomination.

4. Continuing Education for Elders

- a. All elders who are actively serving in a local church are required to fulfill the continuing education requirements outlined in the chapter “Ministerial Education.”
- b. Elders who consistently fail to meet the continuing education requirements will no longer be eligible to serve as a pastor in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

CHAPTER 13

Ordained Chaplains

¶161 Description

1. Ordained chaplains are members of the United Brethren church who have been called by God and are pursuing employment as professional members of the chaplaincy.

2. Ordained chaplains provide pastoral care for persons of diverse backgrounds in physical, mental, spiritual, and social need in diverse settings.

3. Their call has been confirmed by the church through a process of examination, education, and accountability.

¶162 Qualifications

To become a candidate for ordination as chaplain, a national conference minister must do the following:

1. Complete the educational requirements for ordination in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

2. Complete four units (1600 hours) of Clinical Pastoral Education in an institution accredited by the American College of Pastoral Education.

3. Demonstrate a level of faithfulness and competency which warrants consideration for licentiate status.

¶163 Procedure for Ordaining Chaplains

The following procedure is established for the ordination of chaplains.

1. Request by the National Conference Minister

After holding a national conference license for a minimum of two years, individuals may submit a request to the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Team for consideration for the office of ordained chaplain in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

2. References

The applicant shall submit five letters of reference giving evidence of the applicant's marriage and family relationships, interpersonal relationships and social skills, and faithfulness in Christian living. The letters should be obtained from the following individuals:

- a. Two Clinical Pastoral Education supervisors.
- b. The pastor of the local United Brethren church the candidate attends.
- c. A layperson serving in leadership at the local United Brethren church the candidate attends.
- d. A friend or relative.

3. Written Responses

The applicant shall submit responses to the questions in the chapter, "Questions Asked of Candidates for Ordination."

4. Examination

Applicants shall be examined by the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Team.

5. Ordination by the National Conference

- a. Following the examination, the examining committee shall report its findings to the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team and make any recommendations it deems consistent with its findings.
- b. Pending a favorable recommendation from the examining committee, the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team may choose to grant ordination status.

¶164 Loss of License

1. The Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team shall have the authority to revoke the credentials of any chaplain whose life and ministry are inconsistent with the expectations detailed in the Discipline.
2. Should they desire, the chaplain shall be granted an opportunity for a hearing before final action is taken.

¶165 Expectations of Chaplains

In addition to the general expectations of all ministers and members in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, elders are expected to faithfully fulfill the following.

1. Annual Reporting

All chaplains must file an annual report of their activities with the bishop.

2. Accountability

Since this license is granted by the national conference, ordained chaplains are accountable to the national conference.

3. Ministerial Service

- a. Ordained chaplains shall work under the direction of the bishop.

- b. Ordained chaplains are authorized to officiate at funerals and weddings and to administer the ordinances of baptism and communion.

- c. Ordained chaplains may fill pulpits when ministers are ill or on vacation.

- d. Ordained chaplains may serve as associates, but not as the senior pastor, of any congregation.

4. Continuing Education for Elders

All chaplains are required to complete CEUs annually as offered by the American College of Chaplains and National Association of Catholic Chaplains.

CHAPTER 14

Questions Asked of Candidates for Ordination

In their answers, candidates shall include Scripture references and personal examples.

¶171 Section 1: Commitment to the Christian Faith and Call to Ministry

1. *Outcome:* Ministers should be able to clearly and confidently articulate their journey of faith and offer a convincing testimony of God's current activity and direction. Because the United Brethren Church believes strongly in a ministerial call, ministers should further be able to clearly articulate their reasons for seeking a ministerial license.

2. *Questions:*

- a. Describe your conversion experience and journey of faith.
- b. Describe your call to ministry, including your reason for desiring ordination and your future plans regarding ministry.
- c. Describe the spiritual walks of your spouse and children. How have they demonstrated support for your call to ministry?

¶172 Section 2: Theology

1. *Outcome:* Ministers should be able to articulate the uniqueness (in polity and history) of the United Brethren Church.

2. *Questions:*

We believe that the issues contained in our Confession of Faith are the fundamental issues of Christian orthodoxy which are consistent across theological perspectives in the evangelical church. Thus, for each section of the Confession of Faith, the candidate should be asked the following questions:

- a. Do you agree with this position of the United Brethren Church?
- b. From your own biblical and theological perspective, how would you defend this position?

c. Summary question (to be asked at the conclusion of the review of the Confession of Faith): How will you respond to those whose theological positions may differ from yours in any of these areas?

¶173 Section 3: Membership, Family, and Social Standards

1. *Outcome:* Ministers should be able to articulate the uniqueness (in polity and history) of the United Brethren Church.

2. *Questions:*

For each of the membership, family, and social standards of the United Brethren Church (Discipline, chapters 4-6), the candidate should be asked the following questions:

- a. Do you agree with this position of the United Brethren Church?
- b. From a biblical and theological perspective, how would you defend this position?
- c. Will you support, teach, and model the position of the church in your ministry?

¶174 Section 4: Spiritual Maturity

1. *Outcome:* Scripture teaches that the responsibilities of the ministry are not to be entrusted to those whose faith is still new. Thus, ministers should be able to demonstrate spiritual maturity.

2. *Questions:*

- a. Describe your personal practice with regard to the spiritual disciplines.
- b. What are your spiritual gifts, and how do you see them being used in your ministry?
- c. Demonstrate proficiency with a plan of salvation, and identify individuals with whom you have intentionally shared your faith.

¶175 Section 5: Relationships with Others

1. *Outcome:* Because effective ministry is relational in nature, ministers must have a history of healthy relationships with people, including those of the opposite sex.

2. *Questions:*

- a. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of your personality.
- b. Describe your leadership style.
- c. Describe your conflict management style.
- d. Describe how you build relationships with unbelievers.
- e. Do you currently have broken relationships with any other individual, and what steps are you taking (or have you taken) to restore these?

¶176 Section 6: Personal Integrity

1. *Outcome:* Ministers are expected to be persons of the highest integrity. Their names and reputations are to generate respect and admiration from those inside and outside their congregations.

2. *Questions:*

- a. What current debts do you have? Are you managing this debt responsibly?
- b. Do you tell the truth?
- c. Do you manage your time well?
- d. Have you ever pled guilty to or been convicted of any crime?
- e. Have you ever been charged with child neglect or abuse?
- f. Has your driver's license ever been suspended or revoked?
- g. Is your use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs consistent with the standards detailed in Discipline, Chapter 6, Paragraph 143? If not, please explain.
- h. What is your accountability system?
- i. Describe your work ethic.
- j. Are your marriage and family relationships in harmony with the teachings of Scripture as interpreted by this denomination?

Stationing of Ministers

CHAPTER 15

Assigning Ministers

¶201 Philosophical Statements

The following statements identify the basic philosophy used by the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, to make pastoral appointments.

1. Pastors are Stationed, Not Called

In the United Brethren Church, authority for pastoral assignments rests solely with the stationing committee. The final decision regarding a pastoral assignment does not belong to the local church or any of its leadership groups.

2. The Assignment Process Involves Dialogue

a. The stationing committee will communicate with the pastors and congregations involved in the assignment process, and will use all information received as a part of the decision-making process.

b. Both pastor and Personnel Relations Team are granted the right to consult with the stationing committee.

3. The Goal is a Long-term Assignment

Because long-term assignments provide a better opportunity for qualitative and quantitative growth, the stationing committee will try to match congregational needs with pastoral strengths.

4. There are No Guaranteed Appointments

- a. Since the goal of the stationing committee is to match congregational needs and pastoral strengths, individual ministers may experience periods of time when they are not assigned to a local church.
- b. Likewise, local churches may experience periods of time when they are without an assigned pastor.

5. Interim Ministers May be Used

The process of assigning pastors requires a thoroughness which often results in a temporary vacancy at a local congregation. In such instances, the local churches may be assigned an interim minister to provide limited pastoral ministry until a permanent assignment can be made.

¶202 The Assignment Process

Assigning ministers consists of the following steps.

1. A Vacancy Occurs

This vacancy may result from a pastoral resignation, removal, death, or other incapacitation, or it may be initiated by the denomination.

2. Formation of a Stationing Committee

Once a vacancy has occurred, the bishop will form a stationing committee to process this assignment. The stationing committee will consist of:

- a. The bishop or designee as chairperson.
- b. The local church's cluster leader.
- c. The chairperson of the local church's Personnel Relations Team.
- d. Other persons as determined appropriate by the bishop.

3. Meeting with Local Leaders

When a vacancy has occurred, a representative of the stationing committee shall meet with the leaders of the local church to explain the assignment process and evaluate the needs and vision of the congregation.

4. Completion of a Parish Profile

Each congregation will complete a Parish Profile, using the form prepared for this purpose. Responsibility for this rests with the local church.

5. Communication with the Prospective Pastor

- a. After receiving the completed Parish Profile, the stationing committee will approach its choice to fill the vacancy.
- b. The prospective pastor will receive a copy of the Parish Profile and be asked to consider the assignment.
- c. If the prospective pastor declines the assignment, another prospective pastor will be approached.
- d. When a pastor has indicated interest, the Personnel Relations Commission of the church where he/she is serving will be notified of the potential transition.

6. Communication with the Local Church

- a. When a prospective pastor has expressed interest in filling the vacancy, he/she will prepare a pastor's profile which provides biographical information and a philosophy of ministry.
- b. This document will be presented to the leaders of the local church for review.
- c. The team will conduct an initial interview with the candidate.
- d. If the information seems satisfactory, a pastoral interview with the Personnel Relations Team and the stationing committee will be held in the process toward assignment.
- e. If the pastor is currently serving at another United Brethren congregation, he/she must also notify the chairman of the Personnel Relations Team at the current church.
- f. The candidate may speak on a Sunday at the church.
- g. An "Agreement of Understanding" will be completed to document the understandings reached.

8. Assignment is Announced

At the earliest possible time following this introductory meeting between the new pastor and local leaders, the assignment will be announced. The pastor will be given ample time to inform his/her present church of the new assignment.

¶203 Assignment of Associate Staff Members

The Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, recognizes the need for multi-pastor congregations to create staff relationships which meet their special interpersonal and directional needs. As such, within the framework of the stationing committee process, the denomination grants these congregations the right to request and receive resumes, interview candidates, and designate the person they deem best for associate staff positions, with the following understandings:

1. The final decision for employing and terminating associate staff members rests solely with the local church.
2. The bishop must be informed of any United Brethren ministers under consideration.
3. If a church hires someone who does not hold a United Brethren ministerial license, the national conference is not obligated to provide licensing.
4. While the primary accountability relationship rests with the senior pastor, ministers licensed by the national conference are required to participate in all annual reporting and accountability processes required by the national conference.

¶204 Special Appointment Assignments

1. Stationing committees may appoint national conference ministers and elders to special appointment as-

signments, such as chaplains, missionaries, and general officials.

2. These appointments are made on the request of the minister or elder called to such service.

¶205 Temporary Assignment of Non-United Brethren Ministers

Ordained or licensed clergy in other Christian denominations or independent churches may be appointed to serve as supply pastors at United Brethren churches under the following requirements:

1. Conditions

- a. Such ministers must be in good standing in the church or denomination in which they are licensed.
- b. Such ministers must provide valid ministerial credentials.
- c. Such ministers shall be examined by the regional Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Team to determine matters of:
 - (1) Personal integrity.
 - (2) Commitment to the Christian faith.
 - (3) Ministerial call.
 - (4) Relationships with others.
 - (5) Spiritual maturity.
 - (6) Understanding of and agreement with the doctrinal distinctives, history, and polity of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.
- d. A positive recommendation must be made by a stationing committee and the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Team.
- e. Such ministers shall not be granted a vote in the national conference or in national conference elections, including any referenda.

2. Reporting

Such ministers will file an annual report with the bishop and cluster leader.

3. Accountability

Such ministers will be required to participate in and be accountable to a cluster.

¶206 Removal of Senior Pastors

Senior Pastors may be removed by action of the bishop, or by action of the local board in consultation with the bishop.

CHAPTER 16

Exemption from Assignment

All national conference ministers and elders are assumed to be available for assignment. The Church

of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, recognizes that life situations may warrant a time of unavailability and establishes the following exemptions.

¶211 Ministry-Related Service

1. Ministers serving in ministry-related positions, such as chaplaincy, educational positions, or other ministries in which ministerial credentials are helpful, may request Ministry-Related Service status from the bishop.
2. This status exempts a minister from assignment during the tenure of this service.
3. Ministerial credentials are considered to be in good standing with this status.
4. Ministers are expected to submit an annual minister's report.

¶212 Retired Status

1. At age 65, ministers may request Retired Status from the bishop.
2. This status exempts a minister from assignment and does not need to be renewed.
3. Ministerial credentials are considered to be in good standing with this status.
4. Retired ministers are free to engage in ministry roles at their discretion without compromising their retired status.

¶213 Leave of Absence

1. Ministers may request Leave of Absence from the bishop while actively pursuing further education or for other personal reasons.
2. This status exempts a minister from assignment for the period of one year.
3. Ministerial credentials are considered to be in good standing during this exemption period.
4. A leave of absence may be renewed annually for up to three consecutive years, after which the minister shall be assigned to Inactive status.
5. Ministers are expected to submit a request for status renewal and rationale along with their annual minister's report.

¶214 Medical Leave

1. Ministers who cannot perform their duties because of a physician-certified medical condition may request Medical Leave status from the bishop.
2. This status exempts a minister from assignment for the duration of this status.
3. Ministerial credentials are considered to be in good standing during this exemption period.
4. Ministers will enjoy all rights and privileges of their credentials, and are expected to submit an annual minister's report.

¶215 Inactive

1. Ministers who desire and/or require exemption from assignment for a period beyond the Leave of Ab-

sence may request Inactive status from the bishop.

2. During this period, such ministers shall not perform any of the duties of the ministry except at the discretion of the bishop.

3. After remaining in this status for two years, ministers shall surrender their credentials to the bishop to be held in trust until such time as they re-enter ministry.

4. Ministers are expected to submit an annual minister's report.

¶1216 Probation

1. Ministers who are living inconsistently with the expectations and obligations of ministers as described in the Discipline, or who are under investigation for such, will be assigned Probation status by the bishop in consultation with the PMLT.

2. Ministerial credentials shall be suspended during this exemption period.

3. During this period, ministers shall not perform any of the duties of the ministry, and must surrender their credentials to the bishop to be held in trust until such time as the full restoration process is completed (as detailed in the chapter "Restoration of Ministers").

Other Information

CHAPTER 17

Restoration of Ministers

¶301 Introduction

The tragedy of highly placed Christian leaders falling into sexual immorality has become increasingly front page news. The problem is not just with highly placed Christian leaders. In a survey by *Christianity Today*, 23% of pastors responding admitted to sexual indiscretions, mostly with people within the parish. Many others emphasized strong temptations in this area, overcome only by the grace of God.

The problems above are not confined to pastors who have a weak view of Scripture. Bible-believing pastors are vulnerable as well. The time has come to address this concern and other moral failures.

Most churches have not developed guidelines for fallen religious leaders. The Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team (PMLT) realizes that there are numerous areas for which a pastor or church leader may need restoration. Not every area can be detailed in a document such as this.

The PMLT recommends that a specific workbook be

followed in the event of pastoral indiscretion.

Thomas Pedigo has written a workbook with excellent guidelines and checklists for numerous pastoral indiscretions. His *Restoration Manual* is a workbook for restoring fallen ministers and religious leaders. It describes various checklists that a restoration team should consider when working with specific situations. His list of twenty topics include family, financial, spiritual, moral, behavioral, and mental situations.

¶302 Prevention

Society today is badly in need of families who model living above temptation through the grace of God. The cost of preventing the tragedy of moral failure by the pastor is far less than the cost in money, pain, grief, disillusionment, and disappointment that comes after the fact.

Much of the cost of prevention must be borne by the pastors themselves. They need to continually put forth the effort needed to pursue the spiritual disciplines and maintain a strong relationship with Jesus Christ. A strong home life, good marriage, and pure thought life take diligent labor but are invaluable allies against temptation.

Jesus said to "watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation" (Matthew 26:41). Temptation is not the same as sin, but to play with fire is an invitation to be burned. Opportunities for temptation should be reduced as much as is practical. Keep dealings with the opposite sex always innocent and above criticism.

The cost of prevention is also borne by those in positions of authority. Careful screening of applicants for national conference license from the local church and from other denominations is a first step. Credentials and references need to be checked out for any past history of moral failure. Accountability is a continual necessity, and hard questions need to be asked by a pastor's Ministerial Leadership and Ordination Team when there is good evidence of problems.

¶303 Procedures when Charges Arise

When charges arise, it is very important that all actions be taken quickly to minimize further complications. Confidentiality should also be strictly adhered to, where appropriate.

Since the lay delegate is the spokesman of the local church, he should be the person to contact the bishop when a situation arises. The bishop in turn should contact the stationing committee and the cluster leader. Guidelines for determining guilt or innocence when charges are contested are beyond the scope of this paper.

When guilt of sexual immorality has been clearly determined, credentials are to be surrendered. There should be an immediate relieving of pastoral responsibilities. Such action should be done by the bishop and not left to the discretion of the local church. Discretion by the local church allows the opportunity for politics to enter the picture along with evaluations of the "compassion" and "holier than thou" attitudes of those involved.

All affected parties need to be dealt with. Too often the spouse is left on the sidelines while the one committing the sin is treated as a sort of “celebrity.” Efforts also need to be made to help “the other woman” to confess and be restored if possible, recognizing that often she is a person within the church.

¶304 Assumptions for Restoration

The procedures for restoration listed below apply to situations where guilt is clearly established and the pastor desires restoration. Restoration is only possible in a climate of repentance evidenced by integrity and cooperation.

The necessary assumptions for restoration are:

1. The fallen person has truly repented and experiences genuine sorrow for sin.
2. There is a decisive renunciation of the act.
3. There is an attitude of non-defensiveness, i.e. there is no excuse making.
4. There is a spirit devoid of bitterness.
5. The spouse is ready to forgive and restore the marriage without an accusatory attitude.
6. An acknowledgment of sin has been made to the spouse and family.
7. Public confession has been made to the church in which the pastor has served.

¶305 Recommendations for Restoration

When moral failure has occurred, discipline needs to be administered for the protection and restoration of all parties, including those harmed and hurt in the local church.

1. The church cannot avoid the issue of accountability or surrender to a siren song of “Let’s not be rigid and judgmental.”
2. It also is not Christian to simply walk away from a fallen brother.

The goal is not to punish but to restore through biblical discipline. The Restoration Team (bishop, pastors, and other church leaders) needs to approach this task with utmost sincerity. The apostle Paul tells us, “Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted” (Gal 6:1; also Romans 12: 17-19).

A Restoration Team is to be appointed by the bishop in consultation with the cluster leader, made up of three or four persons. The members of the Restoration Team should be mature in the faith. Team members should be elders in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, or at least serving in ministry in a United Brethren church.

The Restoration Team does not have to specifically perform the duties, but they are responsible for oversight of the process. The Restoration Team will monitor and establish conditions and progress toward restoration and explore circumstances that led to wrong choices in the first place, such as problems in the home. From time

to time, the team members need to meet apart from the person being restored in order to reassure themselves that they are not being manipulated or misled.

When dealing with the situation, the Restoration Team will also set up marriage and psychological counseling with a reputable Christian counselor, as needed. The coverage of the cost of counseling is to be determined by the Restoration Team.

Coincident with the goal of restoring the fallen pastor is the goal of restoring the marriage. If practical, both husband and wife should be sent to a Christian retreat center for one or two weeks for intensive spiritual and psychological counseling. Marriage counseling by the counselor selected above by the Restoration Team should then continue until satisfactory resolution.

When there is a breakdown in the process because of the attitude or actions of the one to be restored, the team may recommend to the bishop termination of restoration efforts.

¶306 Goal of Restoration

In restoration of the pastor who has fallen, there are four goals in most situations: Restoration to fellowship, worship, service, and leadership, in that order. Before a person resumes pastoral responsibilities, God’s people need assurances that the same problems will not occur again. It is one thing for a person to repent and be forgiven, but it is another to entrust souls into the hands of someone who has not yet been fully restored.

1. Restore to Fellowship

The central goal in this step is restoration to fellowship with God and His Church through Jesus Christ. The “assumptions for restoration” listed above are integral to this goal. The restoration team helps to insure a continuing and growing relationship with Christ through accountability and monitoring.

2. Restore to Worship (1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:6-8)

Accountability, spiritual care, and growth take place within the local church. The fallen pastor should be encouraged to worship in a local UB church, if feasible. The specific church will be determined by the Restoration Team in consultation with the local pastor.

3. Restore to Service

All Christians should exercise their gifts for ministry (Eph 4:9-16). Again, this is done within the context of the local church. Avenues of service should be sought out quickly, recognizing that before one can be faithful in much, he must restore faithfulness, trust, and integrity in a little (Matt 25:14-30; Luke 16:10). The Restoration Team should continue to monitor progress in ministry projects/opportunities through consultation with the local pastor.

4. Restore to Spiritual Leadership

In the final sense, this is a restoration that only God can make. The church can put a fallen pastor back into pastoral leadership, but only God can put real spiritual leadership back into the pastor. Men such as David give evidence that God is willing to do so. But it is a costly procedure. Integrity, humility, rebuilding of confidence, and blamelessness should all be present. The nature of the moral failure should also be considered. The qualifications in 1 Tim 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 apply just as much for restoration as they do when initially entering the pastorate. A return to the pastorate may not be an actual goal in every situation.

Restoration to pastoral ministry should not be considered a guaranteed thing. One of the deterrents to falling into sin is to realize the costs involved. A pastor who knows beforehand that yielding to sin would bar him forever from the pastoral ministry is less likely to yield. These matters must be treated with utmost seriousness, in the fear of the Lord. The full authority of the Word of God and the integrity of what and who a spiritual leader should be must be upheld.

Before renewal of credentials and returning to pastoral ministry, there is to be a minimum of one year of probation, under the supervision of the Restoration Team. There must also be certification by the marriage counselor that underlying spiritual and psychological problems have been dealt with satisfactorily. A recommendation is also needed by the pastor of the church in which the person has been worshipping.

The Restoration Team may then make recommendation to the bishop, who in turn may refer the matter to the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team for action. Recommendation is not to depend on such items as money-raising, church growth, or speaking ability or popularity, but demonstration of restoration of spiritual qualities such as integrity, purity, and holiness. Spiritual leadership involves a dedication and commitment to please God first and confront people in their sin by the authority of the Word of God, to speak the truth in love but to speak the truth. If the person to be restored is not able to do so with a clear, forgiven conscience, he is not yet ready for pastoral ministry.

If there has been restoration to the pastoral ministry and then repeated moral failure, restoration should be confined to the first three goals.

¶307 Footnotes

“How Common is Pastoral Indiscretion?” *Leadership*, Winter Quarter, 1988, pp. 12-13.

For further comment on the four goals, see Edward G. Dobson, “Should A Fallen Leader Be Restored?” *Fundamentalist Journal*, May 1989, pp. 2f.

¶308 Sources

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CHAPTER 18

Sabbatical Guidelines

¶311 Introduction

In the last 100 years, sabbaticals have become primarily identified as the time off used by professors in universities who want to study a subject for a concentrated period of time, usually in a location away from home. Prior to that, however, sabbaticals were used as a means for clergy to recuperate and restore their physical and spiritual vigor.

Without time off, clergy are good candidates for burnout. Pastors are on call around the clock and are “among the last generalists,” required to be orators, theologians, counselors, and administrators.

One study has shown that in a typical church, the pastor is required to wear at least 16 different and distinct ministry hats. Wearing all those hats is often what he’s called—and paid—to do. But it’s unrealistic to think a person responsible for such a huge spiritual role can do it without periodically getting away for an extended time of renewal.

There is a need for fulltime ministry professionals to be refreshed and restored physically, emotionally, and spiritually for their ministry effort.

Effective pastoral service requires a greater than normal commitment of time and effort, and families often suffer due to this huge responsibility.

Renewal periods are not vacations, but times for intentional exploration and reflection, for regaining the enthusiasm and creativity for ministry, for discovering what will make the pastor’s heart sing.

The Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team encourages churches to adopt a policy for pastoral sabbaticals (compensated leaves of absence). This policy is intended to encourage sabbaticals for ministry professionals who can benefit from a period of change and renewal, and such leaves are to be used for professional and personal development.

¶312 What is a Sabbatical?

A sabbatical is a time to focus in-depth on things that are important to a person’s work and life with

the church. Sabbaticals for pastors are highly recommended in order to renew the calling and creativity of our spiritual leaders. Such sabbaticals should include intentional times for reflection, rekindling the spirit, and deepening spiritual life and family relationships.

Most pastors will never receive a sabbatical. Those who do, however, find it to be a transformative experience. A pastor will probably survive without a Sabbath rest, but a sabbatical will help him thrive in his church.

¶313 Why Should We Give Our Pastor a Sabbatical?

A congregation should arrange for a pastor's sabbatical because it is biblical, and because both the pastor and the church need it. The sabbatical year practiced by the Hebrew people was the final year in a cycle of seven years (Leviticus 25:3-4). It was also a time when the Hebrew people had the opportunity to renew their trust in God as the provider of all of their needs, even during the time when they did not labor.

After pastors have served a congregation for five years or more, they have a tendency to take God and one another for granted, often falling into frustrating patterns rather than finding a faithful and creative future. A sabbatical for the pastor can provide time to focus on reading, writing, preaching and prayer, and forces members to exercise their ministries for the good of one another and the gospel.

¶314 What's the Purpose of a Sabbatical?

In general terms, a sabbatical strengthens and further develops a pastor's ability to serve the church. This happens when a pastor experiences the results of a well planned Sabbath. These results include the following:

New Perspective. Perhaps most significant, a pastor will gain a new understanding of the world in which his church ministers. This will deepen his own insight and positively affect his preaching and his service.

Spiritual Renewal. One of the easiest places to dry out spiritually is in the pulpit. A pastor is constantly talking and teaching about the spiritual life. But because it is so much a part of his conversation and work, maintaining and developing his own spiritual life seems less important. So it is easy to neglect. A pastor sabbatical can be a time to renew spiritual disciplines that got lost in the busyness of life.

Rest. Pastor sabbaticals are not vacations. However, intense stress needs more than a week or two to break away from. It will likely take a pastor a month just to unwind from the stresses of everyday ministry.

Education. Whether or not he actually earns a degree or certificate, a pastor sabbatical is educational. He will learn from his travels, from his research, from new relationships, and from quiet times alone with God.

Renewed Passion and Vision. All of the above results lead to this. A pastor will return from his sabbatical with a clearer sense of mission and the renewed energy

to work toward accomplishing it.

¶315 Why do We Want our Pastor to Do This?

1. Being an effective pastor involves continual spiritual growth.

2. Parish ministry today is changing rapidly. Pastors need to retreat periodically to retool or refocus their ministry approaches.

3. Pastors work long, hard hours without weekends off, and are rarely afforded the luxury of having two consecutive days off every week.

4. Because of the stress of doing ministry in this changing culture and because of the long hours of work each week, without regular renewal time (a sabbatical) pastors risk facing symptoms of emotional burnout and poor physical health.

¶316 How does the Congregation Benefit from the Pastor's Sabbatical?

1. A pastor will almost assuredly come back with refreshed energy and a clearer focus for ministry in our midst.

2. The congregation's ministry will get even stronger, and one's pastor will be healthier and doing better ministry.

3. With the pastor gone for a while, individuals in the church can use their individual gifts in new and different ways.

4. A church will hopefully develop the awareness that they should not become overly dependent on their pastor.

¶317 What are the Conditions for a Sabbatical?

A leave is a privilege which may be granted to an individual who has demonstrated above-average performance in his professional responsibilities.

1. The pastor has served the church for a minimum of six years of fulltime service from the initial date of hire. A proposal for a sabbatical may be submitted in the sixth year of fulltime employment for a leave during the following (7th) year.

2. The pastor must be a fulltime ministry professional (e.g., senior pastor, associate pastor, youth pastor, music and worship pastor, etc.).

3. A sabbatical may be a 1-2 month leave. Additional lengths of time are usually beneficial for the recipient. The ideal renewal program is an uninterrupted time of three to four months. Only in rare and compelling situations should a renewal program be split into two or more pieces.

4. Pastors are encouraged to present a written plan for their sabbatical to the church's governing board. Usually this is done three to six months in advance of the sabbatical. This written plan can include such details as their personal objective, a description of the major elements of the experience, proposed beginning and ending dates, listing of job responsibilities so proper coverage may be arranged, and any anticipated

cost to the congregation.

5. It is expected that there would be no contact between pastor and the church unless there was extreme emergency.

¶318 What Do Pastors Do On Sabbatical?

Sabbaticals can be designed in a variety of ways. However, here are a few things that pastors frequently include in their time away.

- *Visit Israel.* A visit to the Holy Land helps bring biblical events to life. It transforms a pastor's teaching.
- *Write.* He might write some articles for publication or finish a doctoral dissertation.
- *Visit Other Churches.* Explore other worship and preaching styles.
- *Visit Missionaries.* Part of the pastor sabbatical might include time to meet with missionaries where they work.
- *Ministry Projects.* He might help a church rebuild after a fire, serve meals at an inner-city mission, or help with outreach at a major sporting event.
- *Rest.* Though a pastor sabbatical is not vacation, he should take time to rest. Without rest, the stress levels of ministry cannot be broken.
- *Education.* Many pastors use their time away to further develop their understanding of ministry, counseling, or preaching.
- *Travel.* Visiting other countries can be educational, eye-opening, relaxing, and restorative. It will give new perspective.

These are just examples of what other pastors have done on their sabbaticals. A pastor doesn't have to focus on just one thing while he is gone. A little variety will make the time more productive. For some great advice from pastors who've gone on sabbaticals or to find possible getaways, check out these websites:

- Parsonage.org
- Lillyendowment.org/religion

¶319 How Can We Pay for a Pastor Sabbatical?

You say, "We are convinced that our pastor needs a Sabbath rest. He knows what he wants to do while he's gone. The congregation is supportive. But how are we going to pay for it all?"

A church will need money for guest speakers while the pastor is gone. A pastor needs extra money for travel, supplies, seminars, retreat centers, and other expenses. A pastor sabbatical isn't cheap. So how can a church afford it? Here are a few ideas.

- *Make it a Budget Item.* The best way to pay for a pastor sabbatical is to plan for it well in advance. Put it into the annual budget and save the money over several years.
- *Lilly Endowment.* As part of their National Clergy Renewal Program, the Lilly Foundation distributes grants to churches to help them with pastor sabbaticals. Extensive planning and paperwork are required

(lillyendowment.org/religion)

- *Special Offerings.* Allow people in the congregation to give sacrificially to a pastor's time away. Do this only after the congregation has been thoroughly educated about the need and purpose of the pastor's sabbatical.
- *Continue Paying the Pastor's Salary.* Pastors receive full salary, pension, and health benefits; car allowance is not usually paid during the sabbatical time. Pastors are responsible for the educational cost of the sabbatical, though their continuing education dollars may be used. A pastor's bills won't stop just because he isn't preaching every Sunday. Keep paying his full salary so that he can afford to be gone.
- *Sliding Scale.* Churches may consider a sliding scale for sabbaticals longer than one month (i.e. first month = 100%, second month = 95%, third month = 90%, etc.). It is assumed that the church will not receive outside funding (e.g. a grant or restricted donation) for the leave. If the church were to receive such funds, then these percentages could be revised in proportion to the amount of the funding. In no case shall the total salary exceed the amount of the normal full salary of the individual for the period of the leave.

¶320 Summary

A sabbatical can provide:

1. A wonderful time for congregational lay leaders to step forward and take responsibility for the ministry and programs of the congregation while the pastor is gone.
2. A service opportunity for people to use their gifts of being worship assistants, preachers, doing hospital and home visits, or performing administration and oversight.
3. An opportunity not only for the pastor, but for the whole congregation!

Planning for a sabbatical might seem financially overwhelming. But if a church plans ahead, sets money aside a little at a time, and looks for alternative sources of assistance, giving the pastor a sabbatical becomes something a church can't afford not to do.

Adopted February 24, 2009

CHAPTER 19

Official Doctrinal Positions

¶331 The Gift Ministry of the Holy Spirit

In a study of the gift ministry of the Holy Spirit, one becomes deeply impressed with the thought that any doctrine of the church, though right in itself can be wrongly elevated to a position it does not deserve. There must be a balanced message. At its center is man's salvation in Jesus Christ.

We must place equal emphasis upon the importance of the Spirit and the Word. The Church must be open to whatever God wants her to do. The Church must discover a professed openness to the fullness of the Spirit which reconciles negative attitudes. Those of the Church who disagree on the gift ministry must remember love is the cord that never breaks. The Church must seek to have everything done under the guidance of the Spirit, in obedience to the Word, so that it exalts Jesus Christ, ministers to the Church, and witnesses to the world. The deepest intention of members of the Church should be a spiritual fullness that we so desperately need.

(This statement is a summary of a much larger study on this topic. The complete study is included as an appendix in "Theological Perspectives" by Dr. Paul R. Fetters, ed.)

¶332 The Authority and Infallibility of Scripture

The Church of the United Brethren in Christ reaffirms unequivocally the Word of God, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be sole authority for the believer and the church and the only infallible rule of faith and practice; that sincere and full acceptance of the Bible as final authority is an indispensable condition of true Christian unity and further the Church of the United Brethren in Christ calls upon all churches to restore the Word of God to rightful preeminence in teaching, preaching and practice.

As the result of a contemporary resurgence of the issues of authority and infallibility we believe it is important to again declare our belief in the Holy Bible, the Word of God written, as the infallible Word of God to man, wholly trustworthy in the fullness of its message of God's redemptive grace and His acts in history.

Further, we dedicate ourselves to the proclamation of the Word through teaching, preaching and personal witness, calling upon God's people everywhere to join us in this noble task, so that others may find in the sure, dependable Word of God what we have found—an infallible guide.

(Adopted by the 1977 General Conference)

¶333 Depravity

All persons are born, because of the fall of the race in Adam, with an inherent tendency toward evil. This depravity has negatively affected and is operative in every faculty of one's being. Each person, because of the inherited depravity, when confronted by the world, the flesh and the devil, will follow the sinful nature, deliberately choosing to ratify sin, and thus assumes the guilt and condemnation belonging to a sinner.

(Adopted by the 1981 General Conference)

¶334 Divine Foreknowledge

Our Confession of Faith states: "We believe in the only true God....that this triune God created the heavens and earth and all that in them is, visible as well as invisible, and furthermore sustains, governs, protects,

and supports the same."

The Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA affirms that God's knowledge of all past, present and future events is exhaustive and infallible. God's knowledge includes all future decisions and actions of free moral agents. The openness view denies that God's knowledge is this comprehensive. Thus, the "openness" view of God's foreknowledge is contrary to our denomination's historic understanding.

(Adopted by the 2005 US National Conference)

¶335 Destiny of the Unevangelized

Our Confession of Faith states: "We believe in Jesus Christ; that He is the Savior and Mediator of the whole human race, if they with full faith in Him accept the grace proffered in Jesus....We believe that the Holy Bible, Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God; that it contains the only true way to our salvation; that every true Christian is bound to acknowledge and receive it with the influence of the Spirit of God as the only rule and guide; and that without faith in Jesus Christ, true repentance, forgiveness of sins, and following after Christ, no one can be a true Christian."

The heart of the United Brethren movement is evangelism. We believe in a transformed life made possible through an experiential faith in Jesus Christ. The church believes that God wants all people to come to salvation by hearing the gospel proclaimed and responding to it with personal faith. Salvation is possible only through the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

We recognize that some in our church believe that God may, if he so chooses, save some to whom the gospel message has never been specifically proclaimed, namely, those whose deaths occur prior to an age of accountability, the mentally impaired, or those who have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. Even with this understanding, the church has always insisted that salvation is a gift of God, given solely on the basis of the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

(Adopted by the 2005 US National Conference)

CHAPTER 20

Ten Principles to Assist and Encourage Your Pastor's Spouse

Typically, the pastor is the only individual in the family employed by the church. It is imperative for the church leadership and church family to see the pastor's spouse as such—the spouse of their pastor. Even in the rare situation where the spouse (or adult children) is employed by the church, this distinction is key to authority and relational issues.

To encourage a healthy atmosphere between the pastor, pastor's spouse, and church body, several areas need to be considered and addressed throughout the ebbs and flows of family life and ministry life.

¶341 Ministry

Understand that God has given pastoral spouses talents and spiritual gifts to be used for his glory—within the home, church, and/or community. Make every effort to provide a welcoming environment for their gifts to be used within the church body.

¶342 Distinction

Be cautious in assuming or placing unwelcome responsibilities on pastoral spouses simply because they are married to the pastor. Give them freedom to help their partners carry the burden of ministry as best suits the pastoral couple.

¶343 Individuality

Just as each pastor's ministry will have its own distinctives and characteristics, so too will the ministry of the pastor's spouse. Seek to encourage pastoral spouses with the unique personality, giftedness, and strengths God has given them—and in relation to their stage in life and the demands they currently face (children, aging parents, etc.).

¶344 Sanctuary

It is very valuable to promote and encourage a “safe haven” within the pastor's home. For churches that provide a parsonage for their pastor, it is important to also grant the necessary freedom to the pastor's family to make their house their home. The church family and key leadership should respect the privacy of those who live in the parsonage and provide resources for any needed repairs or improvements. These respect issues are equally important for churches whose pastor lives in a private dwelling.

¶345 Connection

It is important for church leaders to promote and encourage healthy communication. Pastor, pastor's spouse, and church family all need to avoid triangulation while also allowing for personal styles and family dynamics when dealing with ministry-related communication (email, texting, voicemail, etc.).

¶346 Friendship

Promote and encourage healthy interactions between pastoral spouses and the church family and community. Relationships are a natural avenue for sharing life, faith, and ministry. Opportunities to nurture relationships with extended family, pastoral couples, church family, and community are essential for long-term health and contentment.

¶347 Parenthood

Pastoral spouses play a vital role in raising their children. Support and encourage a healthy environment within the family unit by providing the freedom for the unique needs and stages of each child as they grow and mature. Be careful not to single out the pastor's children on issues of behavior and ministry involvement. Rather, pray for and encourage the pastor's children as individuals and embrace their unique personal and spiritual development.

¶348 Sacrifice

Understand that pastoral spouses and children often forfeit/share out of their personal time with the pastor to benefit the needs of others. Promote a healthy schedule for pastors to take days off and vacation days each year for personal health and mental well-being, as well as for the refreshment and nurturing of family relationships.

¶349 Commitment

All married couples who profess a faith in Jesus Christ will, therefore, serve as an example of what a Christian home and marriage should look like. While there is no perfect pastor or pastor's spouse, the reality is that their relationship and marriage may be used by others in unfair comparison, be idealized, or be targeted with unwanted attention.

Church leadership must commit to pray for their pastor's home life, marriage relationship, and children. Understand that Satan targets Christian marriages for attack—including the pastoral couple. Encourage them to share ministry together as much as possible within their specific family dynamics, preferences, and availability. Prayer support by the church family on behalf of the pastoral spouses and families is essential for the pastor's health—and the health of the church.

¶350 Invest

A pastor who is happy at home will be a more effective pastor for the church body as a whole. Open dialogue between pastors and the Personnel Relations Committee concerning the well-being and happiness of the spouse is beneficial for both pastors and spouses. Encourage continued health within pastoral homes and marriages by providing the necessary funds to underwrite the expense for an annual get-away with the spouses and/or the necessary resources to attend a marriage conference

Licensing Pathways

in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA

I will be Ordained

Provisional License

- UB member.
- High school diploma (or equivalent).
- Appropriate lifestyle.
- Affirmation of pastor/board.
- Background check.
- Written answers.
- Reference forms.
- Interview.
- PMLT approval.



National Conference License

- UB member.
- One year service as Provisional minister in local church
- Complete course of study.
- UB History Course.
- Appropriate lifestyle.
- Referral of local board.
- Written answers.
- Reference forms.
- Interview.
- PMLT approval.



Ordained Elder

- UB member.
- 2 years of service as National Conference minister.
- Complete Course of Study.
- Appropriate lifestyle.
- Referral of local board.
- Written answers.
- Reference forms.
- Interview.
- PMLT approval.

I will NOT be Ordained

Provisional License

- UB member.
- High school diploma (or equivalent).
- Appropriate lifestyle.
- Affirmation of pastor/board.
- Background check.
- Written answers.
- Reference forms.
- Interview.
- PMLT approval.



Specialized Ministry License

- UB member.
- One year of service as a Provisional minister in the local church.
- Complete Course of Study.
- UB History Course.
- Appropriate lifestyle.
- Referral of local board.
- Written answers.
- Reference forms.
- Interview.
- PMLT approval.

Temporary Lay Minister License

- UB member for minimum of two years.
- Local church member for minimum of one year.
- Appropriate lifestyle.
- Pastoral referral.
- Written answers.
- Local church interview.
- Local board approval.
- Notify bishop.



Permanent Lay Minister License

- Local church member.
- Two years of service as Temporary Lay Minister.
- Complete Course of Study.
- Appropriate lifestyle.
- Pastoral referral.
- Written answers.
- Local church interview.
- Local board approval.
- Notify bishop.



Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team

Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA

License Advancement Plan

IN THE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH

Upon receipt of a Provisional or National Conference license, the entry level license for a United Brethren pastor, we ask you to sign the following agreement. The Provisional license is the first step in the process toward a National Conference license, Specialized Ministry license, or Ordination. The National Conference license is just one step toward Ordination.

1. I agree to complete the United Brethren History course no later than two years from today.
2. I agree to complete the necessary requirements for a Specialized Ministry license or Ordination. I anticipate accomplishing this by the following date: _____.
3. I will submit a written plan to accomplish this process to the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team no later than six months after being approved for this license.
4. I agree to submit to the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team an annual report of my progress toward the agreed upon plan.
5. I agree to submit an annual pastor's report to the national office by February 15 of each year while holding this license.

If the above are not fulfilled, I understand that my license could be suspended until the agreement is fulfilled.

Signature of Candidate

Date

Signature of Regional PMLT Representative

Date

