Manual of Commissioning Procedures

2012 Edition

To Be Used By District Examining Boards/Boards of Oversight
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This edition builds upon the hard work of many individuals. Several years ago the National Ordination Council recognized the need for a set of documents that would clearly define, standardize, and implement the guidelines of the National Association of Brethren Church Elders and the several districts to provide for a national ordination examination process.

The members of the National Ordination Council developed the original “Sequence of Events Leading to Licensure and Ordination,” and the accompanying written exam, oral exam, forms, and readings. NOC members later developed the original tracking Commission: Call to Ministry and the checklist. When commissioning was added, the members of the National Ordination Council collaboratively added the necessary sections. The many members of the Council who over the years developed, edited, and updated these documents have made this edition possible, and their contribution is gratefully acknowledged.

In order to distribute these documents as efficiently as possible, it was decided to have them edited for content, abbreviated whenever possible, and translated into electronic formats that could be easily transmitted and distributed. In many cases the original editions were lost, and it was only through the efforts of pastors throughout the denomination that a complete set of documents in adequate condition to be translated electronically became available.

It is with deep appreciation for the work done by so many, and in the hope that these documents will continue to assist those who seek to serve in ministry for the Kingdom of God in The Brethren Church that this edition is presented.

The 2004 Edition contains mainly cosmetic changes, but already reflects the desire of the various constituencies that depend upon this material; that it remains a current guideline, able to be easily updated to reflect the changing needs of our district while upholding timeless values and standards.

The 2008 Edition makes significant changes to the written exam, with a complete re-write of the reading program requirements, updating the questions and materials to reflect the need for an easier to understand format.

The 2009 Edition has significant changes to the written exam, including changes to many forms which streamline the process.

The 2010 Edition separates Commissioning Procedures from the Licensing & Ordination Procedures, and has updated tracking, sequence, and other forms.

The 2012 Edition completes the separation of Commissioning, Ordination, and Reading Program into three separate documents, with a renumbering of all documents

Dr. G. Emery Hurd, editor
Digital Submission Guidelines

- All documents will be submitted in either Word compatibility mode (.doc, .xls, .ppt, .pps) or Rich Text Format (.rtf) or adobe (.pdf)
- All documents will have the following naming rules:
  - Last Name, dash (-), then First Name of Candidate
  - Title of Document
  - Four digit year
  - Dash (-) then two digit month
  - OPTIONAL – Dash (-) then two digit day
  - Date is NOT NEEDED if document is not a report, although the date format above is still recommended.
- It is difficult to send by email large documents to some servers. It is therefore advisable to send multiple small files instead of a single large one.
- All audio will be sent in either MP3, WAV, or WMF formats or on a CD.
- All Video will be sent in either AVI, MPEG, or WMV formats or on a DVD.
Brethren Church Commissioning Candidate Tracking Form  
Revised 05/05/2010

The candidate, the appropriate district board, and the presiding officer of the National Ordination Council should maintain a copy of this form.

The Candidate is ultimately responsible for the proper submission of all forms and materials.  
PLEASE SUBMIT FORMS DIGITALLY IF POSSIBLE

District Responsible for Oversight: ____________________________________________

Name of Candidate: ________________________________________________________

Street: ____________________________________________________________________

City, State, Zip Code: _______________________________________________________

Phone: ___________________________ Fax: ________________________________

E-Mail: ___________________________________________________________________

Church Where Membership Held: _____________________________________________

Church Currently Serving (or Seminary Year): _________________________________

Name of Supervising Elder: _________________________________________________

Street: ____________________________________________________________________

City, State, Zip Code: _______________________________________________________

Phone: ___________________________ Fax: ________________________________

E-Mail: ___________________________________________________________________

☐ Commission: Request for Examination by Local Church  
Date : ___/___/___  
 Only to be used by candidates not seeking licensure leading to ordination

☐ Commission: Authorization by District Board  
Date : ___/___/___  
 Only to be used by candidates not seeking licensure leading to ordination

--continued on next page --
☐ Commission: Pastoral Profile –

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Date</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Philosophy of Ministry</td>
<td><em><strong>/</strong></em>/_____</td>
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</table>

☐ Professional Resume’ WITH CURRENT PICTURE – Date Received: ___/___/___

☐ Commission: Positions on Social and Self Care Issues ___/___/_____

EVERY CHURCH, CANDIDATE, AND MENTORING PASTOR SHOULD HAVE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS (Current Edition)

___ Manual of Commissioning Procedures
___ Manual of Ordination Procedures
___ Manual of Procedure of the Brethren Church
___ Manual of Pastoral and Congregational Procedures of the Brethren Church
___ Brethren Beliefs
___ District Constitution/By-Laws
___ Brethren Pastor's Handbook
___ Other Items Required by Specific District:
  ___ Item 1: ________________________________________________________________
  ___ Item 2: ________________________________________________________________
  ___ Item 3: ________________________________________________________________
  ___ Item 4: ________________________________________________________________
  ___ Item 5: ________________________________________________________________
SEQUENCE OF EVENTS FOR COMMISSIONING
Revised 5/20/2010

This document is used in cooperation with the
“Commissioning Candidate Tracking Form”

Candidate, Mentor and the District Examining Board/Board of Oversight should
maintain separate copies of this document for each candidate, marking when each
item is completed.

PLEASE SUBMIT ALL DOCUMENTS DIGITALLY IF POSSIBLE

STEP 1 - INITIAL CALL (Optional) (Commission: Call to Ministry)
1. At any time, the local church may call a person to consider the Pastoral Ministry or any Special
Ministry. The candidate must hold membership in a recognized Brethren Church or under the
authority of the United States Ministry Council for a period of not less than one year prior to
issuance of call. NOTE: Each candidate & each local congregation is responsible for
qualifications delineated by local & District constitutions.
2. The local church notifies the Board of Oversight/Examining Board of action (Use Commission: Call
to Ministry)
3. Such a call is not necessarily a prerequisite for commissioning, licensing, or ordination
4. Candidate would then proceed to Step 2 – Commissioning

STEP 2 – COMMISSIONING (Forms H, I, J, K, Issues)
1. The local church votes to request examination for Commissioning for a Special Ministry & notifies
the Board of Oversight/Examining Board (Use Commission: Request for Examination).
2. The Board of Oversight/Examining Board sends the candidate three (3) copies of the Confidential
Reference Form (Use Commission: Confidential Reference Form), giving the date for returning the
forms.
3. The date & place are set by the Board of Oversight/Examining Board for examination. The Candidate
is then notified & given a basic outline of areas to be covered during the interview.
4. The candidate completes Commission: Pastoral Profile and Resume including Resume and
Commission: Philosophy of Ministry, and Commission: Positions on Social and Self Care Issues.
4. The Board of Oversight/Examining Board notifies the candidate & the local church about the results
of the examination (Use Commission: Authorization for Commissioning).
5. The local church conducts public recognition of commissioning for Special Ministry, returning a
completed Commission: Authorization for Commissioning to the Board of Oversight/Examining
Board.
NOTE: Commissioned persons are supervised by their local church, and at the discretion of the district
reviewed by the District Board of Oversight at regular intervals. If later a commissioned individual
should seek ordination, they should then proceed to the procedures of licensing & ordination.
PROCEDURES FOR COMMISSIONING
REVISED 5/5/2009

These Procedures are also outlined in the Commissioning Candidate Tracking Form and Commissioning Sequence of Events.

STEP 1: INITIAL CALL

Overview
1. At any time, the local church may call a person to consider the Pastoral Ministry or a Special Ministry.
2. The local church notifies the Board of Oversight of action. (Use Commission: Call to Ministry.
3. Such a call is not necessarily a prerequisite licensing or ordination.

Procedure
1. When a local church deems that one of its members evidences potential for either the Pastoral Ministry or a Special Ministry, it may "call" such a member. Should a member feel led by the Holy Spirit to offer himself or herself to these specialized life-work vocations, that person may notify the church leaders and request that they consider issuing a "call."

2. Following previous announcement, the church may vote upon extending the prospect a call "to consider the Pastoral Ministry or a Special Ministry as a lifework." This may be done at a regular church business meeting or a specially called meeting of the congregation. The vote should be by secret ballot. Such a decision by a local church may come at any time in the life of the prospect and does not automatically include a request for examination for commissioning or licensing, which is a separate process (see Step 2 and Step 3, below).

3. When the vote indicates a "call," the presiding officer or secretary should notify the Board of Oversight of the church's action, using a form obtained from the Board (Commission: Call to Ministry).

4. Such a call may not require a prerequisite to licensing or ordination.

Step 2: COMMISSIONING

Overview
1. The local church votes to request examination for Commissioning for a Special Ministry and notifies the Board of Oversight (Use Commission: Request for Examination).
2. The Board of Oversight sends the Candidate three (3) copies of the confidential Reference Form (Use Commission: Confidential Reference Form), giving the date for returning the forms.
3. The date and place are set by the Board of Oversight for examination. The Candidate is then notified and given a basic outline of areas to be covered during the interview.
4. The Board of Oversight notifies the candidate and the local church about the results of the examination (Use Commission: Authorization for Commissioning).
5. The local church conducts public recognition of commissioning for Special Ministry, returning a completed Commission: Authorization for Commissioning to the Board of Oversight.
6. The action taken by the District Board of Oversight and the local church must be reported to the National Office by sending a copy of Commission: Authorization for Commissioning.
Procedure

1. Examples of Special Ministry include various fields of Christian work, Christian Education, Music, and Youth which are directed, financed, or recognized by the church.

2. A candidate for a Special Ministry will be "commissioned" [set apart] for that field, rather than ordained. If ordination is desired later, the individual may follow the proper procedures for licensing and eventual ordination.

3. The responsibilities and limitations of a person Commissioned for a Special Ministry will be determined by the Board of Oversight in consultation with the local church and consistent with the candidate's sense of calling, spiritual maturity, gifts, educational training, and personality in relationship to others.

4. When a local church deems that one of its members evidences interest in, and capacity for, a particular Special Ministry, it may "call" such a member to that work and recommend examination by the Board of Oversight.

5. Following a previous announcement, the church may vote at a regular church business meeting or a specially called meeting of the congregation. The vote needs to be by ballot.

6. When the vote indicates a "call" and request for examination, the church secretary should notify the Board of Oversight of the action, using Commission: Request for Examination obtained from the Board. The same form requires the candidate to indicate a desire for examination and Commissioning.

7. Upon receipt of Commission: Request for Examination from the church, the Board of Oversight shall arrange a suitable time and place for the candidate to appear for examination. The questions and discussions should be designed so that the Board will be able to ascertain the candidate's fitness for the Special Ministry desired.

8. When the Board of Oversight approves the Commissioning of the candidate, the Board will, if its decision is ready, inform the candidate verbally at once and later in writing. The Board will also notify the church requesting the examination of its decision. If the Board approves commissioning, it shall so authorize the church, using Commission: Authorization for Commissioning, and keep a copy for its own files.

9. Upon receipt of authorization from the Board, the local church shall formally schedule a service of Commissioning for Special Ministry. A copy of the completed Commission: Authorization for Commissioning should then be returned to the Board.
COMMISSION: CALL TO MINISTRY  
(Revised 5/1/2012)  
Completed by Local Church Issuing Call

Date: ________________________________

TO: The Board of Oversight/Examining Board of the ____________________________District:

______________________________________________________________________________ is a member in
good standing and full fellowship of the ____________________________Brethren Church located in _____________________________________________________________.

This candidate received a “call” to consider the Pastoral Ministry or a special Ministry by this congregation in a business meeting on ___/____/_______/ (mm/dd/yyyy).

The result of the secret ballot vote was __________ affirmative and __________ negative, with _________________ qualified voters present.

We believe this person has the potential of serving well the Lord and The Brethren Church in the years ahead. We will continue to encourage, nurture, and pray for this potential servant of the Lord.

Signed:

Pastor: _____________________________________________________________________________

Moderator: __________________________________________________________________________

Secretary: ____________________________________________________________________________

Deacon(ess): __________________________________________________________________________

Deacon(ess): __________________________________________________________________________

Instructions: Send one copy to the candidate, another to District Board, and another to The Brethren Church, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805.
COMMISSION: REQUEST FOR EXAMINATION
(Revised 5/1/2012)
Completed by Local Church Issuing Call and Candidate
COMMISSION: PASTORAL PROFILE AND RESUME SHOULD ALSO BE COMPLETED (UPDATED) AND SUBMITTED WITH THIS FORM

Date: ____________________________

TO: The Board of Oversight/Examining Board of the ____________________________ District:

_______________________________________________________________ is a member in
good standing and full fellowship of the ________________________________ Brethren
Church located in ____________________________________________________________.

The church has called this candidate to the Special Ministry of
_______________________________________________________________ and now requests
the Board to examine for commissioning to this ministry. This call was issued at a
congregational meeting on ___/_____/_______/ (mm/dd/yyyy). The result of the secret ballot
vote was _________ affirmative and _________ negative, with ______________ qualified
voters present.

Signed:
Pastor: ____________________________________________________________________
Moderator: __________________________________________________________________
Secretary: _________________________________________________________________
Deacon(ess): __________________________________________________________________
Deacon(ess): __________________________________________________________________

Candidate:
I hereby indicate my desire to be examined for Commissioning for the above ministry.

Signature of Candidate: ___________________________________________________ Date: __________

Instructions: Send one copy to Board, another copy to National Office.
COMMISSION: CONFIDENTIAL REFERENCE FORM
(Revised 4/1/2012)
To Be Completed by References

TO THE CANDIDATE: Forward one of these questionnaires to the following -- your pastor, church moderator, and one other person who knows you well (none of whom is a family member).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONDENTS: Please complete all items of this evaluation with reference to the candidate named below, who has applied for either Ministerial licensing or Commissioning for a Special Ministry in the District. Your candid response will enable the Board of Oversight to give recognition in areas of strength and counsel in areas of weakness. Your prompt response will be appreciated. All evaluations are confidential.

Please return before _____________(date) to the following:

The ___________________________ District Board of Oversight/Examining Board

Address Line 1: _____________________________________________________________

Address Line 2: _____________________________________________________________

City, State, Zip Code: ______________________________________________________

Thanks in advance.

Candidate's full name: _______________________________________________________

Respondent's name and title: ________________________________________________

Respondent's Address: _______________________________________________________

Respondent's City, State, Zip: ______________________________________________

Respondent’s Phone: ________________________________________________________

~ Questionnaire Begins on Next Page ~
1. How long and how well have you known the candidate?

2. How do you perceive the candidate’s parental and family relationships?

3. How do you perceive the candidate’s marital relationship (if married)?

4. What contribution has the candidate made to the ministry of the local church?

~ Questionnaire Continues on Next Page ~

Instructions: Place an "X" in the column which best describes the candidate. In the case of very high or very low marks, a supplemental comment, using the back of this form, would be helpful.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very Poor</th>
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<td>Personal Appearance</td>
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<td>Personal Financial Management</td>
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<td>Adaptability in New Situations</td>
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<td>Emotional Stability</td>
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<td>Personal Initiative</td>
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<td>Self Discipline</td>
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<td>Self Confidence</td>
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<td>Self Understanding</td>
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<td>Tact</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct and Character</td>
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<td>Punctuality</td>
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<td>Participation in the Church</td>
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<td>Leadership Skills</td>
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<td>Dependability</td>
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<td>Skill in Verbal Communication</td>
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<td>Skill in Written Communication</td>
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<td>Creativity and Resourcefulness</td>
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<td>Teaching Skill</td>
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<td>Tolerance for Others</td>
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<td>General Intelligence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faith and Commitment</td>
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<td>Harmony in Relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Promise as a Christian Leader</td>
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</table>

5. Other comments or insights that might be helpful in evaluating this candidate’s effectiveness in Christian Ministry (use other side if desired).

Thanks again for completing this questionnaire.  
Please return to address on first page by due date.
COMMISSION: AUTHORIZATION FOR COMMISSIONING
(Revised 5/1/2012)
Completed by Board and Local Church Issuing Call
Date: ______________________________

This is to certify that ____________________________________________ was examined by the Board of Oversight/Examining Board on the above date and approved for Commissioning for the Special Ministry of ________________________________ unless revoked for cause. We are satisfied with the candidate’s faith, life, spiritual attainment, and personal fitness for ministry and authorize the ______________________________________ Brethren Church located in ____________________________________________________ to proceed with a public service of commissioning.

The candidate is commissioned for ___________ (give term in years or “duration of service”) under the mentoring/supervision of __________________________________________

Signed:
District: ____________________________________________________________

Board Chairperson/President: ____________________________________________

Board Member: _________________________________________________________

Mentor/Supervisor/Board Member: __________________________________________

Completed By Local Church:
Upon the authorizing for commissioning by the Board of Oversight/Examining Board, our church conducted a service of Commissioning for Special Ministry:

Date of Service: __________________________________

Pastor: ____________________________________________

Moderator: ____________________________________________

Secretary: ____________________________________________

Instructions: Send one copy to Board, another to District Secretary to request Ministerial License Card, valid for one year, and another to National Office.
COMMISSION: PASTORAL PROFILE AND RESUME  
(Revised 5/1/2012)

NOTE: A COMPLETE RESUME’ WITH PICTURE IS TO BE COMPLETED IN ADDITION TO THIS FORM

Date this profile was completed ___________ 

Name ___________________________________ Date of Birth ___________ 

Last _________________________________ first ___________________________ middle initial ___________________________ 

Address (where to send correspondence) ___________________________________________ ___________________________________________ 

(Street Address) _______________________________ (city) _______________________________ 

(state) ___________________________________ (zip code) ___________________________________ 

Telephone number: ________-________-_______ (H) ________-________-_______(W) 

Email: ___________________@_________________________ 

1. Pastoral Status District Congregation 

Date of Licensing ___________ _______________________________ 

Date of Ordination ___________ _______________________________ 

Date of Commissioning ___________ _______________________________ 

If non-Brethren, please provide contact information for verification purposes. 

Name: 

Phone: 

Email: 

2. Current church membership _______________________________ 

3. Current ministry position _______________________________ 

4. Family Description: Single _____ Married _____ Divorced_______ Widowed _____ 

Spouse’s name _____________________ Date Married ____/______/_______ 

Child(ren)’s name(s) _______________________________ 

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5. Have you been married more than once? _______ (If yes, please explain circumstances using additional page)

6. Current or recent community Involvements

7. Current district or denominational involvements

**EDUCATION**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Degree</th>
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<td>Trade School</td>
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**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

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Number of years of full-time ministry as a licensed or ordained pastor_____ yrs.
Part-time ministry will be prorated as one year of service for every two years of part-time work.

**REFERENCES:** List the names and addresses of four people who are familiar with your pastoral ministry.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone (day-time)</th>
<th>(evening)</th>
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CONTINUING EDUCATION

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GENERAL THOUGHTS ABOUT PASTORAL MINISTRY

1. What in your ministry has brought you the greatest level of satisfaction?

2. What in your ministry has brought you the most frustration or disappointment?

3. What do you hope to accomplish in your next ministry?

4. Preferred Type of Pastoral Ministry – check all that apply:
   Full-time _____  Part-time _____  Bi-vocational _____  Yoked (Two-point charge) _____

   Comments:

5. Please provide two sermons on CD – audio is okay; video is preferred.

CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE and CALL

1. How long have you been a Christian? _______ years
   a. Under what circumstances did you become a Christian?

   b. When were you baptized? _____-____-_____ (date)
      in what church? ________________________________
      by what method? _______________________________

   c. How long have you been a member of The Brethren Church? ____________ years

   d. If married, is your spouse a member of The Brethren Church? Yes ____ or No ____

2. What experiences have you had in Christian work (non-pastoral in nature – Mission’s trips, retreats, conferences, church positions prior to pastoral ministry, etc.)?

3. Why do you believe you have been called by the Lord to Christian ministry?
4. When and under what circumstances did you decide to offer your life for Christian ministry?

5. If married, is your spouse in accord with your calling into Christian ministry? Yes or No

6. What is your present habit in devotional life, Bible study, prayer, and reading?

7. What experiences have you had in personal efforts to lead others to an acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?

8. What are your beliefs and practices about stewardship?

9. Do you give 10% of your income to the work of the Lord through the local church? What other ministries do you financially support?

**DOCTRINE: The Message of Brethren Ministry**

Indicate whether you agree completely, **C**, partially, **P**, or not at all, **N**, to the following statements. Please explain your answer to any statements marked **P** or **N** on a separate sheet. Or if completing electronically, type answers into this document.

_____ 1. Our motto: The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible.

_____ 2. The Authority and Integrity of the Holy Scriptures. The ministry of the Brethren Church, desires to bear testimony to the belief that God's supreme revelation has been made through Jesus Christ, a complete and authentic record of which revelation is the New Testament; and, to the belief that the Holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, are the infallible record of the perfect, final and authoritative revelations of God's will, altogether sufficient in themselves as a rule of faith and practice.

3. We understand the Basic Content of Our Doctrinal Preaching and Teaching to be:

_____ (1) The pre-existence, deity, and incarnation by virgin birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;

_____ (2) The Fall of Man, his consequent spiritual death and utter sinfulness, and the necessity of his new birth;

_____ (3) The vicarious atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ through the shedding of His own blood;

_____ (4) The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ in the body in which He suffered and died and His subsequent glorification at the right hand of God;

_____ (5) The justification by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, of which obedience to the will of God and works of righteousness are the evidence and result; the resurrection of the dead, the judgment of the world, and the life everlasting of the just;

_____ (6) The personality and deity of the Holy Spirit who indwells the Christian and is his...
(7) The personal and visible return of our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven as King of kings and Lord of lords; the glorious goal for which we are taught to watch, wait, and pray;

(8) The Christian should 'be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind,' should not engage in carnal strife and should 'swear not at all;'

(9) The Christian should observe, as his duty and privilege, the ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, among which are:

(a.) baptism of believers by Triune (Trine, ed.) Immersion;
(b.) confirmation;
(c.) the Lord's Supper;
(d.) the Communion of the Bread and Cup;
(e.) the washing of the feet; and
(f.) the anointing of the sick with oil.

THE VISION OF THE BRETHREN CHURCH
is a guiding statement of our denomination. As an elder, How do you understand this statement, and what are your responsibilities as an elder to fulfill this vision? In other words, what does transformation look like in your life and ministry?

THE CORE VALUES OF THE BRETHREN CHURCH
express the foundational expressions of our identity. Please express what each value means to you:

RELATIONAL

MISSIONAL

SUSTAINABLE

REPRODUCING

GLOBAL

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF THE ELDER
in the Brethren Church is vital for the future of the church, both locally and nationally. What do you believe is the role of the elder within the national church?
PASTORAL FINANCES
1. Do you have financial obligations and debts which may hinder your ministry? Yes or No
2. Do you make regular contributions to a retirement account? Yes or No
3. Do you have adequate life insurance to help cover your family’s financial needs in the case of your death? Yes/No/Not sure
4. Do you have adequate medical insurance through your or your wife’s current employer? Yes or No

PASTORAL AND CONGREGATIONAL ETHICS STATEMENTS
1. I have read the current pastoral ethics statement and affirm its content. SEE REQUIRED READINGS (initial if true)
2. I have read the current congregational ethics statements (1987 version) and affirm its content. SEE REQUIRED READINGS (initial if true)

PASTORAL ETHICS
1. Have you ever been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor, other than traffic offenses? Yes or No
   If yes, please explain:
2. Has a formal complaint of ethical misconduct ever been filed against you? Yes or No
   If yes, please explain and how the case was resolved:

YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS:
Please list key areas of giftedness
____________________________________
____________________________________
____________________________________
____________________________________

Please list areas in which you do not feel gifted
____________________________________
____________________________________

MY STYLE OF LEADERSHIP IS:
1. What leadership inventories or personality assessment tools have you completed - Disc, Myers-Briggs? Please describe the basic results:
2. How have those instruments helped you understand your leadership, pastoral, counseling styles:
COMMISSION: PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

– If you have previously written a philosophy of ministry and it is appropriate to use as part of this application, please attach. Please consider whether the following areas have been addressed at least in part in that philosophy of ministry. Please limit this paper to 3 – 5 pages.

1. Describe your experience with and/or plan for developing vision and goals for ministry.

2. Describe your expectations of and desired relationship with each of the following, The Board, The Deacon Ministry, The Staff, Committee chairpersons. In other words, your understanding of local church polity.

3. Describe how you foster commitment and accountability.

4. Describe your experiences in, or plans for, discipling or mentoring.

5. Describe your prayer life – successes and challenges.

6. Describe your experience with, and/or plan for, developing prayer in the life of a congregation.

7. Describe your experience with, and/or plan for, developing outreach ministries.

8. Describe your experience with and/or plan for developing educational opportunities in the local church including ministry to children, youth, families, and adults.

9. Worship
   a. My understanding of the purpose of worship is…
   b. My preferred worship style is… (for instance - contemporary, blended, traditional, liturgical, formal or informal)
   c. My preferred preaching style is (evangelistic, manuscript, topical, exegetical)…
   d. Lay participation in worship services should include…

10. What ways would you use to get acquainted with the congregation?

11. Do you prefer working with any particular age group in the church? Do you have, or have you had, difficulty working with any particular age group in the church?

12. Describe the process you use for sermon preparation.

13. Your definition of the church, both local and denomination.

14. Your understanding of the Mission (Purpose) of the church, both local and denomination.

15. What are your core values (Biblical non-negotiable principals, such as worship, discipleship, etc.)
16: What are the roles of the pastor/leader and the laity?

17. What is the responsibility of the pastor’s spouse in service to the congregation?
COMMISSION: POSITIONS ON SOCIAL AND SELF CARE ISSUES

What are your personal attitudes, convictions, problems, and practices in relation to the following? Please include your reflections, appropriate scripture, and acknowledgement/agreement with stated Brethren positions where appropriate

- Abortion
- Alcohol
- Anger/Hostility
- Bio-Ethics (IVF, Stem Cells, etc.)
- Cults
- Depression
- Environmental Stewardship
- Exercise
- Gambling, Lotteries
- Gender Roles
- Greed
- Homosexuality/Gay Marriage
- Honesty
- Marital Fidelity, Divorce
- Non-Conformity
Non-Resistance

Non-Swearing

Occult/Cults

Ordination of Persons of Divorce

Ordination of Women

Personal Discipline

Physical, Sexual, Mental, and Emotional Abuse

Politics / Church & State

Pornography

Poverty

Race / Ethnic Relations / Immigration

Rape/Incest/Sexual Promiscuity

Recreation

Substance Abuse

Tobacco
REQUIRED READINGS FOR COMMISSIONING

GUIDELINES FOR PASTORAL AND CONGREGATIONAL ETHICS

Adopted by General Conference August 7, 1987
(From Manual of Pastoral and Congregational Procedures)

PREAMBLE: In order to establish and promote better working relations between the Brethren, note the following guidelines for pastoral and congregational ethics.

Pastoral Ethics

1. The pastor should live in a manner that testifies to the message proclaimed and exalts the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. The pastor should promote all the programs and goals of The Brethren Church.
3. The pastor should maintain proper dignity in all relationships within the church and in the community.
4. The pastor should grow in Christlikeness and should be involved in continuing educational opportunities to increase effectiveness in ministry.
5. The pastor should abide by the terms of the agreement with the church.
6. The pastor should never measure service by financial considerations.
7. The pastor should care for the parsonage as though it were personal property.
8. The pastor should not allow outside interests to deprive the church of efficient service.
9. The pastor should recognize the value of long-term pastorates and should build the kind of relationships that make this desirable.
10. The pastor should not consider a call from another church whose pastor has not resigned.
11. The pastor should not bargain between churches or negotiate with more than one church at a time.
12. The pastor should give serious attention to keeping physically and emotionally fit.
13. The pastor should minister to the entire congregation.
14. The pastor should be frank, courteous, and cooperative with other pastors.
15. The pastor should manage personal financial affairs with dignity and honor.
16. The pastor should not interfere in the affairs of another congregation.
17. The pastor should guard all confidential information very carefully.
18. The pastor should recognize the sanctity of the pulpit.
19. The pastor should, when leaving a pastorate, encourage total support of the new pastor by the entire congregation.

20. A pastor should not return to a former congregation to visit members or perform services, either weddings or funerals, without first contacting the current pastor.

21. A pastor should have a wholesome relationship with the district board of oversight.

**Church Ethics**

1. The church should demonstrate in the lives of its members that Jesus Christ is Lord of all life.

2. The church should promote all the programs and goals of The Brethren Church.

3. The office of elder is a holy calling and should be respected and esteemed.

4. The church should desire and help the pastor to grow in ability to serve Christ and His church, and should encourage and make possible continuing educational opportunities for the pastor.

5. The church should develop a clearly stated contractual agreement with the pastor and abide by it.

6. The church should recognize that the pastor is entitled to an adequate salary and should take the initiative in providing it.

7. The church should provide an adequate and well-kept parsonage for the pastoral family, or an adequate housing allowance.

8. The employment agreement should apply only to the pastor, not to the pastor’s family. The pastor’s family should assume the role that is expected of any other family in the congregation.

9. The church should recognize the value of long pastorates and should encourage the kind of relationship which makes this possible.

10. The church should extend a pastoral call only after contacting the Director of Pastoral Ministries and making a careful investigation of the candidate.

11. The church should negotiate with only one pastor at a time.

12. The church should develop a budget which promptly meets all its obligations, including those to the pastor.

13. The church should expect the pastor to minister to the entire congregation.

14. The church should realize that hostile or unfriendly criticism of the pastor is unchristian, and should take steps to eliminate such criticism.

15. The church should only lend money to the pastor by written agreement.

16. The church should provide sufficient maintenance help so that those tasks do not become the responsibility of the pastor.

17. The church should avoid criticism of a former pastor and the comparing of former pastors with the current pastor.
18. The church should encourage its members to involve the new pastor in all functions (e.g., funerals, weddings, etc.) related to the pastoral office as soon as that role in the congregation is assumed.

19. The church should understand the pastor’s need for periods of recreation, vacation, and rest.

20. The church, through its officially designated representatives, should have a wholesome relationship with the district board of oversight and the Director of Pastoral Ministries. The church should feel free to contact them if needed.