

**MINISTRY RECOGNITION IN THE  
AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES  
OF PENNSYLVANIA AND DELAWARE**

The following procedures are outlined within the brochure “MINISTRY RECOGNITION IN THE AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF PENNSYLVANIA AND DELAWARE”, and briefly describe the steps established by the Region’s Commission on Ministerial Leadership.

(read slide:)

**Our Purpose**

American Baptist Churches of PA & DE  
is committed to recognizing the ministry call of men and women  
and to the effective preparation of those  
whom God is setting apart  
as pastors or vocational ministry leaders.

We uphold the priesthood of all believers  
and the giftedness of all of God’s people.

We also recognize that  
from within Christ’s Body, the Church,  
that some are called to functions and positions as  
pastors, teachers and leaders  
who are gifted to equip the Church for ministry.

(read slide:)

**Our Purpose**

The establishment of standards for pastoral and vocational ministry credential is to serve the Church and to encourage the highest development of those who will serve as pastors and servant leaders.

These standards are provided to set a pathway for men and women sensing a call to ministry assisting them to find appropriate recognition and context in which to respond to the call that God is placing upon their lives.

The processes and standards outlined are established to encourage trust, ensure competency and develop pastoral leaders who will serve the Church with great joy and effectiveness.

As local American Baptist churches and other ministry organizations seek pastoral leaders it is hoped that these standards will serve as a resource to best recognize those whom God is calling and sending to serve.

These procedures have been developed with the belief that:

(read slide:)

*It was he who gave some to be apostles,  
some to be prophets, some to be evangelists,  
and some to be pastors and teachers,  
to prepare God’s people for works of service,  
so that the body of Christ may be built up until  
we all reach unity in the faith  
and in the knowledge of the Son of God  
and become mature,  
attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.  
Ephesians 4:11-13*

Ministry Recognition in ABCOPAD can be attained through one of three methods: by Ordination through a Standard Process; by Ordination through a Non-Standard Process; and by the Certified Lay Minister Process

First, Ministry Recognition can be attained through  
**Ordination — the Standard Process**

There are ten steps to this process.

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1. Be a member in good standing of an American Baptist Church.

(read slide:)

2. Complete a Bachelor's degree program (4 years of College).

(read slide:)

3. Enroll in and complete a Master of Divinity program from an accredited or Regionally recognized institution (3 year program).

(read slide:)

4. Seek a pre-ordination license from your local church in consultation with the local Association not less than 6 months prior to expected examination for ordination.

(read slide:)

5. Attend and complete the Candidacy Assessment program at the Midwest Career Development Center in Columbus, Ohio.

The Midwest Ministry Development Center is located in Columbus, Ohio. It is a two-day or optional group three-day evaluation for those seeking or considering ordination in Protestant ministry, and includes conversations with a team of Christian psychologists and career counselors. Similar centers are in Chicago, Kansas City, and Austin.

The experience is valued by many pastors, such as this one who writes: "I found their assessment and advice to be thorough, candid, and compassionate. They created a warm and safe place to engage in a deep and broad analysis of my vocation."

(read slide:)

6. Complete courses in Baptist History and Polity and Clergy Ethics (if not part of seminary training).

And important element in this process of recognition is compliance with the Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders of American Baptist Churches.

■ (read slide:)

7. Participate in at least 1 year of supervised Field Education.

This is normally accomplished within the framework of the seminary's curriculum requirements.

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8. Complete an ordination paper and submit to your local Association Credentialing Committee for evaluation.

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So what's in an Ordination Paper? There are four parts:

■ (read slide:)

- Introduction
  - Faith Journey
  - Call to the Ministry
  - Your Gifts for Ministry
  - Academic and Field Preparation
  - Reasons for Seeking Ordination within ABCUSA

■ (read slide:)

- General Comprehension of Christian Doctrine
  - The Person of God
  - The Person of Jesus Christ
  - The Person of the Holy Spirit
  - Humanity and Sin
  - Salvation: The Nature of the Gospel
  - View of Scripture
  - The Christian Hope: Death & Eternal Life
  - Christian Eschatology

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- The Doctrine of the Church
  - The Theology of Mission
  - Ordinances: Baptism & The Lord's Supper
  - Ecumenical Aspects of the Church
  - Place of the Church in History
  - Purpose and Place of the Church in Today's World
  - The Role of the Ordained Minister
  - The Ministry of the Laity

■ (read slide:)

- Relationships
  - Ecumenical Witness to Community and World
  - American Baptist Churches, USA
  - American Baptist Churches of PA & DE
  - The Association

■ (read slide:)

9. Undergo an Ordination Council. Sufficient affirmation of the Association is required.

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10. A call to a specific ministry location.



Second, Ministry Recognition can be attained through  
**Ordination — the Non-Standard Process**



There are eleven parts to this process



You may quickly note that eight of these steps are identical to the **Standard Process** for Ordination: Steps 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 11. There are, however, three distinctively different steps.

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3. Contact the Regional Office, who will arrange a meeting with the Area Commission Team. Complete a preliminary application and ministry evaluation.

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4. Work with the Area Commission Team to develop a Ministry Plan ensuring competency in all areas of ministry. Completion and evaluation of Ministry Plan is necessary before completing following items.



The Commission has developed some tools to help in this assessment and evaluation. Within ten different areas of study, Area Commission Teams will work with candidates for ministry to determine their previous work and educational experiences and make appropriate recommendations for further training in skills and knowledge

**ASSESSING AREAS OF COMPETENCY  
AND  
MINISTRY PLAN**

check when completed

	AREA	PREVIOUS WORK / EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE	MINISTRY PLAN (AS NEEDED)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Introduction to Old Testament</b> Have a thorough knowledge of the religious, historical, cultural background of the OT, the history of Israel, and the formation of the OT.	Describe Course/Experience:  Date: Instructor/Mentor:	Recommended Courses/Experiences:  Instructional/Training Resources:
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Introduction to New Testament</b> Have a thorough knowledge of the religious, historical, cultural background of the NT, the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, and the formation of the NT	Describe Course/Experience:  Date: Instructor/Mentor:	Recommended Courses/Experiences:  Instructional/Training Resources:
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Preaching / Homiletics</b> Understand the principles of preaching as they relate to texts, content, style, delivery and communication of the Word of God.	Describe Course/Experience:  Date: Instructor/Mentor:	Recommended Courses/Experiences:  Instructional/Training Resources:
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Systematic Theology</b> Have knowledge of the doctrines of God, Trinity, Creation, Humanity, the Problem of Evil, Jesus Christ, Salvation, Holy Spirit, Church, and Eschatology, etc.	Describe Course/Experience:  Date: Instructor/Mentor:	Recommended Courses/Experiences:  Instructional/Training Resources:
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Church History</b> Have knowledge of the birth, development, and expansion of the Church through the centuries, and its history and growth in America.	Describe Course/Experience:  Date: Instructor/Mentor:	Recommended Courses/Experiences:  Instructional/Training Resources:

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8. Participate in at least 1 year of supervised Field Education; work with an approved Mentor.

The Area Commission Team can supply a list of Regional mentors to facilitate this Field Education experience.

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Third, Ministry Recognition can be attained through the  
**Certified Lay Minister Process**

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There are nine parts to this process

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1. Be a member in good standing of an American Baptist Church, with support and advice of your church to begin the process.

The **Certified Lay Minister Process** requires the candidate to have the approval of their local church.

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2. Complete the required courses of the Certified Lay Ministry track through the regional Academy of Christian Training and Service, ACTS.

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The **Certified Lay Ministry** track includes a variety of classes, including: Biblical Interpretation, Pastoral Care, Preaching, Theology, Baptist History and Christian Education. **Certified Lay Ministers** are also mentored in supervised ministry opportunities. A diploma is issued upon completion.

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3. Work with an approved Mentor for 2 years and submit their Fitness for Ministry report to your Credentialing Committee.

■ (read slide:)

4. Complete courses in Baptist History and Polity and Clergy Ethics.

This, too, is the same as for those seeking Ordination.

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5. Complete a certification paper and, with support of your local church, submit it to your local Association for evaluation.

Much like an Ordination Paper, this outlines the candidate's core beliefs, theology, sense of calling and mission.

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6. Undergo a Certification Council. Sufficient affirmation of the Association is required.

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7. When an initial Certification is granted, complete 6 units of Continuing Education within 3 years to qualify for permanent certification.

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8. Attend and complete the Candidacy Assessment program at the Midwest Career Development Center in Columbus, Ohio.

Like those seeking Ordination, Certified Lay Ministers must also complete this Assessment.

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9. Develop a plan for ministry with your Association Credentialing Committee.

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Training and preparing for ministry requires both diligence and excellence.

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And just as pastors are called to prepare God's people for works of service, the Commission on Ministerial Leadership is committed to equip pastors with knowledge, skill, and spiritual maturity for ministry.